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LEONARD A. GORDON, AINSLIE T. EMBREE,
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PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

This third edition of the *Sources of Indian Traditions* represents a much greater departure from the second edition (published in 1988) than the second did from the first edition (published in 1958). When the second edition was initially undertaken, the ideological shifts in the study of South Asia that were brought about by postcolonial scholarship and the Subaltern Studies Collective, had not yet solidified. The second edition therefore updated the first by adding new translations, including some readings representing a non-Brahmanical standpoint, and by consulting American scholars of South Asia for input. No major rethinking of the organization of the two volumes was deemed necessary.

Since the late 1980s, mammoth changes in and enrichments of our understanding of South Asian history and historiography have occurred—some of which challenge the very conception of a “sourcebook” itself, for its privileging of certain viewpoints, assuming the primacy of texts (often religious), and perforce omitting considerations of historical context. Further criticisms of the second edition of the *Sources* included its implied divide between the premodern and the modern, mirrored in the distinction between the two volumes, such that religion was made to represent the premodern and politics the modern; the limited nature of some of the selections; the overrepresentation of some traditions; the underrepresentation of women, Dalits, and other marginalized voices throughout; the lack of attention to texts on ritual and pilgrimage, and the omission of sources on art, aesthetics, and scientific analysis; the lack of sufficient

sources from a variety of non-Sanskritic texts; the presentation of traditions as if they were static, fixed entities, with a lack of attention given to overlapping interests, conflicts, and debates; the separating of Hindus from Muslims in both volumes, implying a “Muslim period”; the lack of documents such as council reforms, party platforms, and court cases; and the fact that the volumes stopped in the mid-1980s, without mention of Bangladesh or of all the postcolonial challenges and issues that inform the contemporary study of South Asia.

Despite these criticisms, the continued usage over the past thirty years of the *Sources* shows that there is nothing quite like them on the market. Instead of jettisoning the *Sources*, therefore, the five members of the editorial board for volume 2 of this third edition have undertaken a complete conceptual revision, rather than just an update along the lines established in the first and second editions. Nevertheless, as a team we are committed to the original vision of the *Sources*, as outlined in the preface to the first edition, according to which the source readings that are chosen “tell us what the peoples of India have thought about the world they lived in and the problems they faced living together. [This book] is meant to provide the general reader with an understanding of the intellectual and spiritual traditions, . . . [as well as] the political, economic, and social thought which other surveys . . . have generally omitted.”

We followed five working principles in our revision for the third edition. We resolved to write introductions to each section that would be cognizant and reflective of recent changes in historiography and interpretation; to aim throughout for a combination of thematic, synthetic ordering and a rough chronological sequencing of chapters (the latter being retained for its usefulness in teaching); to restrict ourselves, for reasons of space, to textual materials rather than attempting to encompass or represent the arts, and to forego the temptation to include examples of South Asian transnationalism; to begin volume 2 in 1707, with the death of Aurangzeb, and to conclude it at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, three hundred years later; and to rename the volumes *Sources of Indian Traditions*, to reflect the plurality of cultures inhabiting the subcontinent over the ages. In spite of the fact that both Pakistan and Bangladesh are covered in the new volume 2, it was decided not to rename the sourcebooks *Sources of South Asian Traditions*, because adding materials on Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and the Maldives would make an already large book completely unwieldy. Additional features of the third edition include updated bibliographies; several new maps; an index of themes; and an online website (www.indiantraditions.columbia.edu), where extra readings, color illustrations, and additional maps are provided.

Volume 2 has been considerably expanded and deepened, with a new organizing framework and different pedagogical concerns. An added chapter on the eighteenth century opens the volume; it offers a wealth of Indian and East India Company perspectives on Indian society of the time, and draws upon the latest

scholarly thinking on the dynamism of the post-Aurangzeb period. A few selections from the end of volume 1, in its second edition, have been imported here. The readings in chapters 2 and 3 focus on the status of Western education, social reform, Christianity, women, and debates over the uprising of 1858. Changes include the frequent incorporation of selections used in the first edition but dropped in the second, and the addition of new voices (some of them women), new translations of old selections, and new selections entirely.

Chapters 4 through 7 are organized more tightly around single themes: (4) the early development of liberal social and political thought, as well as of Indian nationalism, including the first decades of the Indian National Congress; (5) the politicized use of religion, especially in the Swadeshi movement following the first partition of Bengal, and the nationalization of art; (6) Gandhi and his contemporaries' views of his politics; and (7) the road to Partition. Each of these chapters incorporates much new material, from Congress presidential addresses, patriotic poems, sources on language controversies, and very short stories, to a completely revamped section on Gandhi and his critics and a discussion of Partition that reflects nearly every conceivable angle.

Chapter 8 is, again, almost entirely new, and tries to bring the *Sources* up to date, chronologically as well as theoretically, by the inclusion of sources spanning the post-Independence period, viewpoints representative of recent scholarship, and opinion pieces on developments in the teaching and presentation of Indian history. Chapter 9, on Pakistan, brings in new themes and readings, updating the 1988 edition, and chapter 10, on Bangladesh, is entirely new (the second edition of volume 2, even though published seventeen years after the founding of Bangladesh, mentioned the country's name only once in the entire text).

Of note is the fact that chapter 5 of the second edition, "Leaders of Islamic Revival, Reform, and Nationalism in Pre-Independence India" (essentially the "Muslim chapter") has been eliminated entirely, with the material therein, plus much more, being dispersed throughout the other, thematically arranged chapters here. This avoids the pitfall of segregating Muslim authors and failing to integrate them properly into the organization of the book.

Overall, many but not all of the special challenges of reconceptualizing the *Sources* reflect the fact that, whether the volume is utilized in North America, Europe, or South Asia, our intended audience is students, of all ages, who may know little about the history of the subcontinent before their exposure to the text. Hence we cannot produce a sourcebook whose organization would be confusing to a beginner.

The issue of representation has also proven difficult. Is the *Sources* supposed to offer writings recognized as significant in their own milieus, or are we aiming for coverage across ideological, social, or gender boundaries? To take chapter 6 of volume 2 as an example, while no one would quibble with the importance of the responses to Gandhi of Nehru, Ambedkar, or Sarojini Naidu, on what grounds does one justify the inclusion of Godse's "May It Please Your Honor,"

from Godse's trial, since the document was not well known at the time? A related question concerns the "primary text." What makes a text "primary," in the modern context? Chapter 8 of volume 2 is full of texts authored by living Indians such as Amartya Sen, Jagdish Bhagwati, Madhu Kishwar, and Partha Chatterjee. Normally, one would class their work as a secondary resource. Why, then, are they part of our sourcebook?

In most cases, field-governed principles have dictated our decisions on issues such as the above. For the sake of informing students about the commitments and methodologies of economists, women's activists, and authors of subaltern and postcolonial studies, we have chosen to include samples of their scholarship and Indian voices reflective of their positions. Likewise, in the main we consider it an important corrective to prior history to include writings by little-known figures—women, members of disadvantaged groups of society, or representatives of sectors not usually recognized as representative or seminal. One cannot imagine a sourcebook published in 2014 in New York that excludes female, Dalit, and other non-elite writings merely because they did not have the scope, in their own times, for popular broadcast.

We join the editors of the first and second editions, from 1958 and 1988, in feeling gratitude for and pleasure in this project, as originally spearheaded by Columbia University and continually supported by Columbia University Press. We hope that, with this third edition, continuing generations of students will find in the two volumes evidence for the greatness of Indian—and now Pakistani and Bangladeshi—civilizations.

Rachel Fell McDermott
Leonard A. Gordon
Ainslie T. Embree
Frances W. Pritchett
Dennis Dalton

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The process of producing the third edition of volume 2 of the *Sources of Indian Traditions* has been long and complicated, and the responsibility for the final product rests with the five members of the editorial team. However, since 2003, when the project was first commissioned by Columbia University Press, we have been aided immeasurably by the contributions of a series of teacher-scholars whose wisdom, expertise, suggestions, critiques, new writing, and new translations have graced the volume's eventual form.

At the start of the process, we were guided by the insightful critiques of the second edition produced, as requested by Columbia University Press, by Wendy Doniger, Diana Eck, Robert P. Goldman, James G. Lochtefeld, Barbara Metcalf, Frances Pritchett, and Gauri Viswanathan. These helped to set the parameters of our evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the first and second editions, as well as of the work that lay ahead of us.

While we discussed everything as a team, and made suggestions to each other as the work progressed, in the main the chapters were updated, rewritten, or produced *de novo* under the direction of individual members of the team: chapters 1, 8, and 9 by Ainslie T. Embree; chapters 2, 3, and 10 by Rachel Fell McDermott; chapters 4, 5, and 7 by Leonard A. Gordon; and chapter 6 by Dennis Dalton. New translations produced especially for this volume were done by Sumit Guha (chapters 1 and 2), J. E. Llewellyn (chapter 3), Sukhendu Ray and Bharati Ray (chapter 5), Pamela Lothspeich (chapter 5), Frances W. Pritchett (chapter 5),

Rajan Krishnan (chapter 6), Jyotirmoy Datta (chapter 7), and Rachel Fell McDermott (chapter 10). We are also grateful to Anisuzzaman, who wrote a short comment on secularism especially for chapter 10.

Special thanks from the other members of the editorial team go to Frances W. Pritchett, who created a *Sources* website that will accompany the printed text as an online resource. We are pleased to include original artwork by Venantius J. Pinto who drew images that begin each chapter.

In early December 2005 we presented a progress report on the project at a conference at Santa Barbara, hosted by Gurinder Singh Mann. We are grateful to the participants for their comments and suggestions.

We have received advice from the following people, who have graciously lent their time and knowledge to this endeavor: Gurinder Singh Mann, who helped us with the Sikh sources in chapters 1 and 7; Brian Hatcher, whose knowledge of the colonial period has enhanced chapters 2–4; Rosalind O’Hanlon, who read over the introductions for chapters 4 and 5; Partha Mitter, who suggested sources relevant to art and nationalism; Kamala Visveswaran, who recommended sources for chapter 6; Matthew H. Baxter, who offered advice on the Periyar selections in chapter 6; Veena Oldenburg, who provided insights into chapter 8; Hasan-Askari Rizvi, who greatly assisted Ainslie Embree in editing chapter 9; Philip Oldenburg, who suggested important improvements to chapters 8 and 9; David Lelyveld and Barbara Metcalf, who gave us advice throughout on aspects relating to Islamic sources; Clinton Seely, Rounaq Jahan, and the late Joseph O’Connell, who suggested valuable materials for chapter 10; Judith Walsh, who did a close reading of the entire manuscript; and Partha Chatterjee and Ayesha Jalal, who gave helpful suggestions.

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We are grateful to William Theodore de Bary, who recommended that Columbia University Press commission a third edition of the *Sources*. Indeed, this project would not have been possible but for the vision, patience, and calm oversight of Jennifer Crewe and her team at the press: Anne McCoy, Leslie R. Kriesel, Milenda Lee, Kerri Cox Sullivan, Kathryn Schell, and Do Mi Stauber.

Finally, the five of us want to thank each other—for the intellectual camaraderie that has made the process of creating this sourcebook both mutually educational and thoroughly enjoyable.

Rachel Fell McDermott
Leonard A. Gordon
Ainslie T. Embree
Frances W. Pritchett
Dennis Dalton

A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

Two sets of rules govern the presentation of this third edition of the *Sources of Indian Traditions*. First, the editors have left completely intact the spelling conventions of the published translations utilized in the source excerpts. In other words, while acknowledging the potential confusion arising from the bewildering array of possible spellings, especially of proper names, we have made no attempt to standardize across the primary source material, believing that such interference would compromise the integrity of the sources. Where we ourselves have done the translating, we have chosen to follow conventions recognized by translators of the vernacular language in question.

The chapter introductions and headnotes, however, which have been written by the volume editors, are crafted according to the following rules:

- Our use of diacritics is light. We have maintained the distinction between long and short vowels *a/ā*, *i/ī*, and *u/ū*, but have not tried to differentiate retroflex and dental consonants (for example, we write *sh* for *ś* and *ṣ*, so “Krishna,” not “Kṛṣṇa”). In rendering Muslim names we have opted for simplicity where possible, and have favored certain modern standard Urdu forms over others; in almost all cases we have dropped the ‘ayn.
- Proper names of people are almost always rendered without diacritics and in an Anglicized form that corresponds to the spelling, if such exists, used by the person in question (“Tagore” rather than “Thakur,” “Aurobindo Ghose” rather

than “Arabinda Ghosh”). When there were choices available, we favored certain standard Urdu forms over others—for example, “Sayyid” over “Syed,” and “Muhammad” over “Mohammad” or “Mohamed.”

- Place names are rendered without diacritics and in the form in which they would have been spelled during the period being described. So, for instance, “Calcutta” changes to “Kolkata” in our prose when we are describing events or selections after 2000, “Bombay” to “Mumbai” after 1995, “Burma” to “Myanmar” after 1989, “Ceylon” to “Sri Lanka” after 1972, and “Dacca” to “Dhaka” after 1971. We have also chosen “Poona,” “Punjab,” and “Banaras,” to be more faithful to the spellings of the majority of the years under review.
- Proper names of Hindu deities are spelled using initial capitals, Roman font, and diacritic marks. We spell such names according to Sanskritic convention (usually with a final *a*), unless we are writing about a regional language that does not use the final *a*. So, for instance, in Sanskrit “Mahākāla” would have a final *a*, but in Bengali it does not.
- The names of groups, defined by religion, caste, or political affiliation; the names of months; and the names of festivals are all capitalized and rendered without italics or diacritics.
- Some terms, such as “ahimsa,” “ashram,” “dharma,” “darbar,” “fatwa,” “hadith,” “jihad,” “satyagraha,” and “ulema,” among others, are treated as English words, in which case they are spelled in the lower case, without diacritics or italics. Other, less commonly recognized terms are spelled with diacritics, typically in the lower case, with italics.
- Titles of poems or songs, as well as slogans, are rendered with diacritics, but in Roman, and with quotation marks (e.g., “Āmār Bhāier Rakte Rāngāno”); titles of journals, newspapers, or magazines are given in italics and without quotation marks, but with diacritics, if necessary (e.g., *Bande Mātaram*). All texts to which we refer in our prose are spelled with italics and diacritics, unless they are part of a generic category, like the Dharmashastras, Smritis, Upanishads, or Vedas (e.g., *Ibratnāma*, *Ādi Granth*, *Strī Purush Tulanā*, and *Tārīkh Khāfi Khān*).
- Generic titles—such as “chief minister,” “diwan,” “guru,” “imam,” nawab,” and “prime minister”—are capitalized only when attached to proper names. “Viceroy,” always capitalized, is an exception. Due to Jinnah’s importance in the volume, and the number of authors who write about him, his honorific title, “Leader of the People,” is spelled in many different ways. When we refer to him in our prose, however, we render his title “Quaid-e Azam.”
- Bengali (not “Bangla”) and Panjabi (not “Punjabi”) are languages (a “Punjabi,” in this volume, is a person from the Punjab).
- Finally, we follow Indian convention in writing “Centre,” not “Center,” when referring to the central government in New Delhi.

CHRONOLOGY

1556–1605	Mughal Empire is put on a firm footing by Akbar
1599	British East India Company founded
1605–1627	Reign of Akbar's son Jahangir
1628–1658	Reign of Jahangir's son Shah Jahan
1641	Foundation of Fort Saint George, Madras
1658–1707	Reign of Shah Jahan's son Aurangzeb
1654	Shivaji proclaims himself an independent king of the Marathas in Maharashtra; dies in 1680
1665	Bombay handed over to East India Company
1690	Founding of Calcutta
1707	Beginning of decline of centralized Mughal control after Aurangzeb's death
1708	Assassination of the last Sikh Guru, Guru Govind Singh
1738–1739	Sack of Delhi by the Persian Nadir Shah
1748–1752	Attacks on the Panjab by the Afghan Ahmad Shah Durrani
1752	Marathas gain control of Delhi
1757	Battle of Plassey
1761	Defeat of the Maratha armies in 1761 at Panipat, north of Delhi, by Ahmad Shah Durrani
1765	East India Company acquires the diwani of Bengal by imperial firman

- 1773 Through the 1773 Regulating Act, British Parliament begins closer supervision of the East India Company
- 1773–1784 Warren Hastings becomes the first governor-general of Fort William, and hence of the East India Company, in Bengal
- 1773 Sannyāsī Uprising
- 1784 Founding of the Asiatic Society by Sir William Jones, judge of the High Court of Calcutta
- 1793 The “Permanent Settlement” in Bengal; charter of East India Company renewed
- 1799 Defeat of Tipu Sultan, Mysore
- 1800 Founding of Fort William College, Calcutta
- 1800 William Carey founds the Serampore Mission Press
- 1809 Haileybury College founded in England to train East India Company cadets
- 1813 Charter of East India Company renewed; ban on missionaries lifted; British and American missionaries enter India
- 1816 Hindu College founded
- 1818 British Baptists establish college at Serampore
- 1818 Defeat of the Peshwa’s government: British take Maharashtra, ending resistance to British rule in western and central India
- 1828 Rammohan Roy founds the Brahmo Sabha
- 1829 Sati criminalized
- 1833 Charter of East India Company renewed; monopoly on trade abolished
- 1835 Macaulay’s Minute on Education; Gov.-Gen. Bentinck is pressured to substitute English for Persian as the official language of government
- 1848 Dalhousie introduces the Doctrine of Lapse as a means to annex territories of rulers without blood successors
- 1849 Defeat of Sikhs and annexation of the Panjab
- 1853 Last renewal of charter of East India Company; first railway and telegraph
- 1856 Passage of the Hindu Widow Remarriage Bill
- 1857 Mutinies of Indian troops and civil uprisings in north and central India
- 1858 Defeat of the uprising; Proclamation of Queen Victoria; abolition of the East India Company; India to be ruled by the British government, with a secretary of state for India as member of the cabinet in London and a viceroy-cum-governor-general under him, ruling on the ground in India
- 1862 Bahadur Shah, last Mughal emperor, dies in Burma, after being exiled there in 1858
- 1866 Founding of the Deobandi Reform Movement and Deoband Islamic School

- 1867 Founding of the Prarthana Samaj in Poona/Bombay
- 1875 Swami Dayananda founds the Arya Samaj in Bombay; H. P. Blavatsky, Henry Steel Olcott, and William Quan Judge form the Theosophical Society; Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan founds the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh
- 1876 Indian Association of Bengal founded by Surendranath Banerjea and others
- 1877 Queen Victoria proclaimed “Empress of India”
- 1885 Indian National Congress inaugurated in Bombay
- 1887 M. G. Ranade founds the Indian National Social Conference
- 1892 Indian Councils Act provides for additional members in all councils, supreme and provincial, and allows the governor-general and provincial governors to appoint Indians
- 1893 Swami Vivekananda sails to the United States and addresses the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago; Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi begins twenty-one years’ work as lawyer and later leader of the Indian community in South Africa; B. G. Tilak reshapes the Ganesh festival into a mass event in Maharashtra, bringing political and religious elements together
- 1897 B. G. Tilak leads resistance to bubonic plague regulations, which provides impetus for individual acts of violence and his imprisonment for sedition
- 1905 First Partition of Bengal, under Lord Curzon, sets off Swadeshi Movement, with “Bande Mātaram,” from Bankim Chandra Chatterji’s novel *Ānandamath*, its political anthem; first mass demonstrations
- 1906 Muslim League founded in Dacca
- 1907 Schism of the Moderates and Extremists in the Indian National Congress; Aurobindo Ghose, an extremist leader, writes “The Doctrine of Passive Resistance”
- 1909 League’s demand for separate electorates granted in the Government of India Act, or Morley-Minto Reforms
- 1911 Partition of Bengal revoked; transfer of India’s capital from Calcutta to Delhi
- 1913 Rabindranath Tagore awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature for *Gitanjali*
- 1914 Ottomans decide to enter World War I on the side of Germany and Austria-Hungary
- 1915 Hindu Mahasabha founded
- 1916 Muhammad Ali Jinnah and B. G. Tilak work out the Congress–League, or Lucknow, Pact, a united constitutional demand for India’s self-government
- 1919 Rowlatt Bills, calling for continuation of wartime repression; Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, or Government of India Act, provides

- for dyarchy and a bicameral legislature; Jallianwala Bagh massacre in Amritsar
- 1919–1924 Khilāfat Movement, led by the Ali brothers (Muhammad and Shaukat Ali) and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
- 1919 Gandhi begins Non-Cooperation Movement
- 1922 Indian policemen burned to death at Chauri Chaura; Gandhi calls off the Non-Cooperation Movement and is imprisoned until 1924 for sedition
- 1923 C. R. Das and his Swaraj Party broker the Bengal Pact, with Muslims receiving a large percentage of positions until they reach parity with their share of the Bengali population
- 1924 New Turkish government abolishes the institution of the caliphate
- 1925 Periyar founds the “Self-Respect Movement”; the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) formed
- 1928 (Motilal) Nehru Report calls for joint electorates and is rejected by Jinnah and the Muslim League; non-violent tax resistance in Bardoli
- 1930 Gandhi’s Salt March and arrest
- 1931 Gandhi released from jail; Gandhi–Irwin Pact; Gandhi at the Round Table Conferences in London; Gandhi returns, resumes non-cooperation, and is imprisoned again
- 1932 The Communal Award grants separate electorates to many communities, including Untouchables; in prison, Gandhi fasts in protest of the Communal Award, leading to the compromise Poona Pact
- 1934 Gandhi released from prison; Jayaprakash Narayan and other leftists found the Congress Socialist Party, which works within the Congress
- 1935 Government of India Act brings provincial autonomy and the possibility of an Indian government at the center
- 1936–1937 Provincial legislative and assembly elections; poor showing of Muslim League; Congress forms governments in seven Indian provinces
- 1939 Congress provincial governments resign in protest over not being consulted when Britain declares India at war with Germany; Jinnah describes this as a “day of deliverance”
- 1940 Individual Congress members undertake acts of satyagraha; Lahore Resolution formulates the Pakistan demand
- 1941 Jamaat-e Islami founded in Lahore by Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi; Subhas Chandra Bose leaves India for Germany
- 1942 Cripps Mission negotiations fail to bring Indian political organizations into the government and hence the war effort; August

- uprising against the government by nationalists suppressed by the Raj
- 1943 C. Rajagopalachari proposes his “Rajaji Formula” for boundaries cutting through provinces for maximum groupings of Muslim and non-Muslim population; Subhas Chandra Bose revives the Indian National Army (INA) and forms the Provisional Government of Azad Hind
- 1944 The INA takes part in the Japanese invasion of India
- 1945–1946 War ends with Japanese and INA defeated; provincial elections for legislative assemblies; the Muslim League sweeps most of the reserved Muslim seats, while Congress wins most of the non-Muslim constituencies
- 1946 New Labour government in Britain under Clement Attlee pledges to free India; Cabinet Mission Plan for possible grouping of provinces in independent India, ultimately rejected by the Congress and Muslim League; Muslim League’s Direct Action Day sets off large-scale riots in Calcutta; formation by Viceroy Wavell of an interim government with Nehru as prime minister, Patel as deputy prime minister, and later Liaquat Ali Khan as finance minister
- 1947 Mountbatten appointed last British viceroy of India; Suhrawardy and Sarat Bose raise the slogan of an undivided sovereign Bengal, but fail to gain support; Partition agreed to by Congress and Muslim League; India Independence Act passed; India, under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, and Pakistan, under Governor-General Muhammad Ali Jinnah, become independent nations; Gandhi fasts in Calcutta for Hindu–Muslim unity
- 1948 Gandhi fasts again for communal unity in New Delhi, provoking his assassination by Hindu extremist Godse; Jinnah dies in Karachi
- 1948–1951 Telangana rebellion in Andhra Pradesh
- 1949 Pakistani prime minister Liaquat Ali Khan moves the Objectives Resolution, directing that Islam be the guiding force in Pakistan’s political life; ratification of the Indian Constitution
- 1950 India becomes an independent republic but remains within the Commonwealth
- 1951 Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan assassinated
- 1952 Bengali language riots in East Pakistan; First Five-Year Plan implemented in India
- 1953 Formation by Fazlul Huq, Huseyn Suhrawardy, and Maulana Bhashani of the United Front Party in East Pakistan, with a 21-point program
- 1954 Release of the Munir Report

- 1955 Pakistan Act of 1955 consolidates all provinces, the capital, former princely states, and tribal areas into “One Unit,” a move seen as the abrogation of provincial autonomy in East Pakistan
- 1956 Constituent Assembly of Pakistan enacts the nation’s first constitution; Awami League invited to form coalition government in Karachi, with Suhrawardy as prime minister; Ambedkar converts to Buddhism, taking much of the Mahar community with him; Report of the States Reorganization Commission in India realigns state boundaries, creating Andhra Pradesh
- 1958 Pakistani president Iskander Mirza dismisses Suhrawardy and the Awami League government, abrogates the constitution of 1956, and gives power to the army under Field Marshall Ayub Khan, who places the country under forty-four months of martial law
- 1962 India’s defeat by China in border war; Ayub Khan enacts a new constitution in which all power is vested in him as president
- 1964 Death of Prime Minister Nehru; Lal Bahadur Shastri succeeds him
- 1965 Ayub Khan leads Pakistan into war with India over Kashmir
- 1966 Shastri dies; Indira Gandhi becomes prime minister of India; Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, leader of the Awami League in East Pakistan, demands his “Six Points,” including autonomy for East Pakistan
- 1967–1975 Naxalite uprisings in West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh
- 1969–1971 Yahya Khan succeeds Ayub Khan as head of a military government in Pakistan; in Pakistan elections, Awami League wins majority, while Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) wins most seats in West Pakistan; negotiations between Awami League and Yahya Khan fail
- 1971 Pakistani army’s attempts to crush resistance in East Pakistan; guerrilla warfare by Bengali resisters; India enters on the side of East Pakistan; an independent Bangladesh secedes from Pakistan; Z. A. Bhutto becomes prime minister of Pakistan and Sheikh Mujib prime minister of Bangladesh
- 1971–1977 Civilian administration in Pakistan under PPP leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto
- 1972 First Constitution of Bangladesh passed by the Constituent Assembly
- 1974 Prime Minister Indira Gandhi presides over tests of the first Indian nuclear weapons
- 1974–1975 Sheikh Mujib declares a state of emergency in Bangladesh and amends the Constitution
- 1975 Sheikh Mujib assassinated in Bangladesh; Ziaur Rahman takes over as military dictator
- 1975–1977 “Emergency” declared in India by Indira Gandhi

- 1977 Janata coalition wins elections in India; Bhutto toppled in Pakistan by General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, who comes to power in Pakistan as "Chief Martial Law Administrator"; Ziaur Rahman introduces changes to the Bangladeshi Constitution, replacing secularism with Islam
- 1979 Promulgation of the Hudood Ordinances in Pakistan, first laws introduced by Zia-ul-Haq in the process of Islamization; Zulfikar Ali Bhutto tried and executed by military government of Pakistan
- 1980 Formation in India of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) from the Jana Sangh; Congress (I) Party wins elections; Indira Gandhi again becomes prime minister
- 1981 Ziaur Rahman assassinated in Bangladesh
- 1982 Hossain Ershad comes to power in Bangladesh
- 1984 Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale occupies the Golden Temple in his bid to force India to create a state for Sikhs to be called "Khalistan"; the Indian army launches Operation Bluestar to rout him; Indira Gandhi assassinated; anti-Sikh riots in India; Rajiv Gandhi becomes prime minister
- 1987 Ershad declares a state of emergency in Bangladesh
- 1988 Ershad gets the Eighth Amendment to the Bangladeshi Constitution passed into law, whereby Islam is declared the state religion; General Zia of Pakistan killed in an air crash; Benazir Bhutto, head of the PPP, becomes prime minister
- 1990 Nawaz Sharif, head of Pakistan Muslim League, elected prime minister of Pakistan; violence in India against the Mandal Commission Report
- 1991 Khaleda Zia, head of the Bangladesh National Party, elected prime minister of Bangladesh; assassination of Rajiv Gandhi; P. V. Narasimha Rao becomes prime minister of India; "liberalization" of Indian economy under Finance Minister Manmohan Singh
- 1992 Babri Masjid controversy in Ayodhya, India: demolition of mosque and serious communal rioting
- 1993 Benazir Bhutto elected prime minister in Pakistan for a second time
- 1995 BJP gains in provincial elections in India
- 1996 Sheikh Hasina Wajed, head of the Awami League, elected prime minister of Bangladesh
- 1998 BJP wins elections and forms government at the Center, with A. B. Vajpayee as prime minister; Vajpayee announces successful testing of nuclear weapons in India; Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif announces the same for Pakistan
- 1999 Kargil clash between forces of India and Pakistan; military coup in Pakistan: General Pervez Musharraf arrests Nawaz Sharif

- 2001 Khaleda Zia, head of the Bangladesh National Party, elected prime minister of Bangladesh; Gujarat earthquakes; Islamic terrorists destroy New York World Trade Center, and others attack the Indian Parliament building
- 2002 Gujarat riots and killing of many Muslims; UN forces composed mostly of US military invade Afghanistan with aid of Pakistan; greatly increased US aid to Pakistan
- 2004 Congress wins Indian elections; Manmohan Singh becomes prime minister
- 2005 US president George Bush and Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh agree to expand cooperation in civilian nuclear activities
- 2006–2007 Bangladesh elections aborted due to allegations of bias by the caretaker government; Fakhruddin Ahmed declares state of emergency and vows to root out corruption; Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina both arrested
- 2007 Pratibha Patil first woman elected president in India; former Pakistani prime minister Benazir Bhutto assassinated
- 2008 PPP wins majority votes to form alliance with Pakistan Muslim League(N); Yousaf Gilani elected prime minister; Pervez Musharraf resigns as president; Asif Ali Zardari, husband of deceased Benazir Bhutto, elected president; November terrorist attack on Mumbai; Sheikh Hasina elected prime minister of Bangladesh
- 2009 Congress wins elections in India and forms coalition government; Pakistani Taliban carry out terrorist attacks in Pakistan
- 2010 Maoist rebels threaten many rural Indian districts; terrorist attacks continue in Pakistan, especially upon Shi'ite and Ahmadiya minorities

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Sources of Indian Traditions

MODERN INDIA, PAKISTAN, AND BANGLADESH



India at the Time of the Mughal Empire, after Robert Wilkinson's 1815 Reconstruction



Chapter 1

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

FERMENT AND CHANGE

In a wide-ranging survey, the Indian historian K. K. Datta noted in 1977 that in much historical writing the eighteenth century emerges as “an inglorious period in the history of India,” depicting the country as subjected to “dreadful political turmoil, social disorder and confusion and a grievous economic decline.”¹ The sources for this judgment, however, were largely members of the old elites who had suffered from the changes that were taking place, foreign observers unfamiliar with the country, or members of the British ruling class in the nineteenth century who wanted to contrast the dire conditions of India under the old rulers with what they believed were the improvements that had taken place under their rule. This view also reflected the accepted interpretation of Muslim rule in India—accepted not only by the British rulers but also by Hindu nationalists, who pictured the golden age of India as destroyed by Muslim invaders.

Recent historical writings by South Asian and Western scholars have noted that the dark picture of the eighteenth century tended to focus on politics in North India and Bengal, ignoring the remarkable social and economic changes taking place in other parts of the country. Thus a careful study of the economic history of the century by Tapan Raychaudhuri can conclude that “imperial decay was in fact compensated for to some extent by the prosperity of the new provincial kingdoms and the emergence of new centers of trade and industry.”²

The selections in this chapter suggest that some prominent features of Indian society, as surveyed in volume 1, survived and adjusted to the massive political, economic, and intellectual changes that took place after 1700. The sources that we have drawn upon to illustrate these aspects of Indian life are largely literary, which results in little attention to the rich artistic life of the times, such as the many important schools of painting that flourished in the eighteenth century, and the abundant variety of “folk” traditions.

A problem of nomenclature arises in identifying the two great civilizations that interacted in India in the eighteenth century, because writers both foreign and Indian have tended to label them as “Hindu” and “Islamic.” We have endeavored to stress that each of these designations covers a very wide (and also overlapping) spectrum of beliefs and behavior; and they are used here more or less as in the Indian Constitution, Articles 25 to 30, to designate self-identified groups claiming certain characteristics not shared with others.

The wide variety of life in eighteenth-century India cannot be arranged in any very satisfactory pattern, but at least five general historical trends, all closely related to each other, can be identified as characterizing the century, all of which remain part of the legacy of the nations of South Asia in the twenty-first century. Of the five, the reorganization of political power was the most obvious: it is marked by the decline of the Mughal Empire and its replacement by strong regional kingdoms, often under former Mughal governors. The second was the emergence of local groups that had formerly been subservient to the power of the imperial center or to the provincial governor; during the period of Mughal disorganization, when changes in the balance of power were experienced and manipulated after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, many local groups were successful for the first time in gaining some autonomy. A third aspect of political change entailed the growing resistance of peasant and tribal groups to external authorities. A fourth trend was the devotional and intellectual creativity within both Hindu and Islamic religious communities, which is of special interest and importance since it links the past with later developments. The fifth was the intrusion of European political, economic, and cultural power into the subcontinent in the last decades of the eighteenth century in greater strength than in any previous period, and in ways that helped to shape modern India.

THE REORGANIZATION OF POLITICAL POWER

In the eighteenth century, the governors of the Mughal provinces, or *subās*, became virtually independent rulers, but without formally rebelling against the Mughal emperor; thus they preserved for themselves a symbol of legitimacy. These major centers of political power, as well as many smaller ones, largely replicated the cultural and administrative styles of the old Mughal capitals of Delhi and Agra. A salient feature of the reorganization of political power was the diffusion of both economic and cultural control to these centers, releasing

new energies that built up new political institutions and weakened old ones. Bengal and Hyderabad are two examples of this process.

In other areas, political power passed to groups with roots in the older traditional cultures of India who had also been important participants in the Mughal power structures and had adopted them for their own use. The most powerful of these were the Marathas, centered in what is now the state of Maharashtra, who controlled much of western and central India as far north as Delhi and territories as far south as Thanjavur (Tanjore). At the end of the eighteenth century they posed the main challenge to British expansion; although they were defeated as a military power in 1818, they became a powerful element in the formation of the Indian nationalist movement.

In the Punjab, the Sikhs, a group defined both by regional political identity and by religion, as noted in volume 1, in the eighteenth century under a number of chieftains ousted the Mughal authorities in numerous areas, establishing their own rule. During this period the Sikhs evolved the distinctive symbols of their religious identity, embodied in the special garb of the Khalsa, the order instituted, according to Sikh traditions, by Guru Govind Singh in 1699 to establish Sikh identity and to unite them into a political power. Under their very able leader Ranjit Singh (1780–1839), they founded a kingdom that dominated the Punjab from 1799 to 1849.

In Rajasthan, the courts of descendants of the ancient chiefs of the region, as well as rulers of small Himalayan kingdoms governed by Rajputs, became centers of religion and remarkable schools of painting, music, and religious poetry. Although they never became a political force comparable to the Marathas or the Sikhs, they self-consciously preserved and patronized a vision of their own traditional culture.

In the south, where Mughal rule had been the weakest, regional chieftains, with historical roots as military chieftains and landlords, asserted their authority. At the great Hindu temples of the south, as well as at the courts of the rulers, sculpture, painting, and music flourished throughout the century, closely allied with the devotional and ritual practices of both the Shaivite and Vaishnavite religious traditions. Many southern rulers asserted their genealogical relations with the great empires of the past, and the cultural continuities with the pre-Islamic period are everywhere evident—in language, literature, religion, art, and architecture. By the end of the century the most powerful regional political power in the south was located in Mysore, whose Hindu rulers, the Wadiyar dynasty, traced their origins to the great Vijayanagar Empire. Their power was usurped by their Muslim general, Haidar Ali, in 1765.

Central to all regional kingdoms from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-eighteenth centuries was what has been called “military fiscalism,” that is, the extraction of tribute payments from local chiefs under threat of military action, in order to create income for the state. In the unstable environment of the period, especially under the spread of Maratha power from western and central

India, but also through the steady expansion of the English East India Company in the east and south, cash was needed to pay for a new style of army, comprised chiefly of infantry groups who rose to prominence with the improved rate of firing and the longer range and accuracy of modern firearms. Such new military groups were supported by states with increased administrative depth and newly important roles for bankers and money-lending.

In addition to the political reorganization associated with indigenous powers, eighteenth-century India was subjected to intrusion from groups outside the subcontinent. Two of these, led by the Persian Nadir Shah in 1738–1739 and the Afghan Ahmad Shah Durrani in 1748–1752, caused terrible suffering in the Punjab and Delhi, and weakened the power of the Mughal emperor. Ultimately, however, it was the British who, through their East India Company and its participation in Indian political life, had far more lasting influence. Although the Portuguese had established their colony at Goa at the beginning of the sixteenth century—defeating local kings, engaging in repeated wars with the Marathas and the Deccan sultanate, and subsequently promulgating repressive religious policies of conversion—by the eighteenth century they had ceased to be major actors. The French and the Dutch had small trading centers on the coast but lost out to the British, who by the end of the eighteenth century had begun the transition from being traders to becoming successors to the Mughals and rulers of an Indian empire. At the end of the eighteenth century they began to reorganize the political landscape.

AURANGZEB: LETTERS TO HIS SONS

When Aurangzeb, the last of the great Mughal emperors, was dying in 1707 at the age of ninety in the Deccan, still at war with the Marathas and other rebels, he is said to have written these letters to his sons, filled with foreboding about the fate of the empire. He tried to divide the empire among them, but as usual a war for the succession broke out. One son, Bahadur Shah, defeated the other two, but he was already an old man and died in 1712. Another war for the succession was followed by uprisings among the Marathas and the Sikhs, as well as palace intrigues that further weakened the imperial institution. The second of Aurangzeb's letters, to Prince Kam Bakhsh, indicates that Aurangzeb, near death, was thinking about Dara Shikoh, the brother whom he had killed nearly a half-century earlier.

These two letters are not part of Iradat Khan's actual text (see more on Iradat Khan below), but have been inserted by the translator with the following note: "It may not be amiss to insert here two letters written by Aulumgeer to his sons, Azim Shaw and Kaum Buksh, a few days before his death" (p. 7). All annotations in parentheses are those of the translator.

To Shaw Azim Shaw: "Health to thee! My heart is near thee. Old age has arrived: weakness subdues me, and strength has forsaken all my members. I came a stranger into this world, and a stranger I depart. I know nothing of myself,

what I am, and for what I am destined. The instant which passed in power, hath left only sorrow behind it. I have not been the guardian and protector of the empire. My valuable time has been passed vainly. . . . My son (Kaum Buksh), though gone towards Beejapore, is still near; and thou, my son, are yet nearer. . . . The camp and followers, helpless and alarmed, are like myself, full of affliction, restless as the quicksilver. Separated from their lord, they know not if they have a master or not. I brought nothing into this world, and, except the infirmities of man, carry nothing out. I have a dread for my salvation, and with what torments I may be punished. Though I have strong reliance on the mercies and bounty of God, yet, regarding my actions, fear will not quit me. . . . Though Providence will protect the camp, yet, regarding appearances, the endeavours of my sons are indispensably incumbent.”

To Kaum Buksh: “My son, nearest to my heart. Though in the height of my power, and by God’s permission, I gave you advice, and took with you the greatest pains, yet, as it was not the divine will, you did not attend with the ears of compliance. Now I depart a stranger, and lament my own insignificance, what does it profit me? . . . My fears for the camp and followers are great; but alas! I know not myself. My back is bent with weakness, and my feet have lost the power of motion. . . . I have committed numerous crimes, and know not with what punishments I may be seized. . . . Though the Protector of mankind will guard the camp, yet care is also incumbent on the faithful, and my sons. When I was alive no care was taken; and now I am gone, the consequence may be guessed. The guardianship of a people is the trust by God committed to my sons. . . . The domestics and courtiers, however deceitful, yet must not be ill-treated. . . . The complaints of the unpaid troops are as before. Dara Shek-koh, though of much judgment and good understanding, settled large pensions on his people, but paid them ill, and they were ever discontented. I am going. Whatever good or evil I have done, it was for you.”

[Scott, *A Translation of the Memoirs of Eradut Khan, A Nobleman of Hindostan, containing interesting anecdotes of the Emperor Alamgeer Aurangzebe and of his successors Shaw Aulum and Jehaundar Shaw; in which are displayed the causes of the very precipitate decline of the Mogul Empire in India*, trans. [from the Persian] by Jonathan Scott, Captain in the service of the Honourable East India Company and Private Persian Translator to Warren Hastings, late Governor-General of Bengal, &c &c. &c. (London: John Stockdale, 1786), 8–9.]

SHAH WALI ALLAH: THE URGENCY OF POLITICAL INSTABILITY

Shah Wali Allah of Delhi (1703–1762) was a Sufi of the Naqshbandi order who was concerned with the decline of Islamic power in India, which he attributed to political and especially social disunity. This disunity, he felt, manifested itself in what was perceived by his contemporaries as irreconcilably competing schools of jurisprudence

and of traditional hadith scholarship, and even in competition among Sufi orders. Most of his works are dedicated to the intellectual pursuit of synthesizing and harmonizing difference; he felt that scholars—and indeed the entire believing community—had a duty to bring about social revival and interschool reconciliation. To this end, he translated the *Qur'an* into Persian, wrote *Qur'anic* commentaries, authored treatises on the hadiths, and composed works on scholastic theology and jurisprudence. Following the methods of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1624), he attempted to show that Sufism was wholly in accord with traditional Islam. At the same time, he argued that conflicts among the Sufi orders could be solved in a way that would unite them to serve the cause of Muslim renewal in India. Finally, in this reassertion of Islam the Muslim ruler had a vital role to play: he should encourage and patronize Islamic learning and piety, and reclaim the administrative and economic power that had passed into the hands of Hindus. There is little evidence for Shah Wali Allah's influence in his own time, but he became a very important source for Islamic social and political thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in India and Pakistan.

Shah Wali Allah witnessed a period of precipitous instability in North India after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707: during the remainder of Shah Wali Allah's life, ten monarchs sat on the throne in Delhi; the Sikhs plundered the northwest from 1708 to 1716, until they were driven back by the Mughals; the Marathas invaded the suburbs of Delhi in 1738, forcing the Mughals to cede territories to them; in 1739 Nadir Shah attacked Delhi; and in the 1740s, the Afghan Rohillas under Ahmad Shah Abdali (later Durrani), were also on the rise. At the Battle of Panipat in 1761, the Maratha forces were defeated by the Afghans, but then Abdali's army mutinied, forcing him to retreat and ending hopes of a renewed Muslim power in Delhi.

THE ROLE OF THE ISLAMIC RULER

In the 1750s, believing that the decline of Mughal political power and the spiritual decadence of Indian Islam were closely related and could only be countered through the internal unity of the Muslim community and the support of a Muslim ruler, Shah Wali Allah wrote a series of letters to various Muslim leaders, exhorting them either to strengthen the Mughal administration or to aid the Mughals in ousting threats to their empire. One such letter, to Ahmad Shah Abdali, urging him to invade India and reassert Muslim control over the Marathas and Jats,³ is reproduced below. There is no evidence that the Afghan was influenced by the letter, for he had already made a number of raids into India, but it is a good indication of the way the theologian understood the relation between political power and religious faith. Although of minor importance in terms of Shah Wali Allah's overall intellectual project, such letters to political personages were not uncommon from Sufis of the Naqshbandi order, who spoke from their consciences about injustice and the need for good, stable government.

There has remained nothing of the sultanate except the name. Because the situation of the king's soldiers has reached this extreme, one may infer to what end has come the ruin of the condition of city people who were on government

salary or merchants, etc. They have been gripped in various tyrannies and difficulties of making a living. Besides all this distress and poverty, they all became widowed, bewildered and propertyless when the force of Suraj Mal [a Hindu chieftain] and Safdar Jang [a Mughal governor of Awadh] attacked the Old City of Delhi. Then successive famines descended from the heavens. Altogether, this community of Muslims is to be pitied. At this time every tax and levy that is current in the imperial administration is in the hands of Hindus. There are no accountants or managers not of that sect. Whatever government or authority there is has been concentrated in their houses; whatever bankruptcy and wretchedness there is has fallen upon the Muslims. . . .

In this age there exists no king, apart from His Majesty [Ahmad Shah], who is a master of means and power, potent for the smashing of the unbelievers' army, far-sighted and battle-tested. Consequently a prime obligation upon His Majesty is to wage an Indian campaign, break the sway of the unbelieving Marathas and Jats, and rescue the weaknesses of the Muslims who are captive in the hand of the unbelievers. If the power of unbelief should remain at the same level (God forbid!), the Muslims will forget Islam; before much time passes, they will become a people who will not know Islam from unbelief. This too is a mighty trial: the power of preventing that is attainable for His Majesty alone, by the favor of the beneficent God. . . .

In the name of Almighty God we ask that he expend effort avidly for a holy war against the unbelievers of this territory, so that in the presence of Almighty God a fine reward may be inscribed in His Majesty's book of deeds, so his name may be recorded in the register of holy warriors . . . , so in the world innumerable foes may fall at the hand of the heroes (*ghāzī*) of Islam, so Muslims may obtain rescue from the hand of the unbelievers. God forbid that this [campaign] should come to pass in the manner of Nādir Shāh's! He scattered the Muslims up and down and went away, leaving the Marathas and Jats safe and sound. Then the rule of the unbelievers gained strength, and the troops of Islam were dispersed. The sultanate of Delhi sank to the level of a boys' game. . . .

The victory of Islam is the destiny of the entire community; so, wherever there is a Muslim, [the Muslim warrior-kings] will love him on a par with actual sons and brothers; and wherever there is a warlike unbeliever, they will be like raging lions. So it is necessary that, in these holy wars, the intention of reinforcing Islam be fixed in the mind.

[From Shāh Walī-Ullāh, *Siyāsī Maktūbāt*, ed. K. A. Nizami
(Aligarh: 1950), 11–15, trans. C. Brunner.]

IRADAT KHAN: DECAY AT THE CENTER OF THE EMPIRE

Iradat Khan was the title given to a poet, Mirza Mubarak-Ullah, whose ancestors had been courtiers under the Mughals. Shortly before he died in 1716, Iradat Khan wrote a history of his times, from which this excerpt is taken. As he describes the palace

intrigues for control of the imperial office, one senses power slipping away from the imperial institution. For Iradat Khan, the explanation of the weakness of the empire was the character of the contemptible emperor and the people around him.

The ruler of whom he speaks, Jahandar Shah, or Farrukh Siyar, ruled from 1713 to 1719.

When Jehaundar Shaw, by the intrigues and support of the [chief noble] Zoolfec-car Khan, had triumphed over his three brothers, and ascended the throne of empire without the fear or dread of a competitor, all the customs of time were changed. He was in himself a weak man, effeminately careful of his person, fond of ease, indolent, and totally ignorant of the arts of government. He had also blemishes and low vices unworthy of royalty, and unknown among his illustrious ancestors. He made the vast empire of Hindostan an offering to the foolish whims of a public courtesan. . . . The relations, friends and minions of the mistress, usurped absolute authority in the state; and high offices, great titles, and unreasonable grants from the Imperial domains, were showered profusely on beggarly musicians. Two crores [1 crore=10 million] of rupees annually were settled for the household expenses of the mistress only, exclusive of her cloaths and jewels. . . . Zoolfec-car Khan, seater, nay even creator of emperors, with such an image of humanity in his hands, became absolute, and so proud, that Pharaoh and Shudad could not have obtained admission to his threshold. He studied to ruin the most ancient families, inventing pretences to put them to death, or disgrace them, that he might plunder their possessions. . . . The minds of high and low, rich and poor, near or distant, friends or strangers, were turned against him, and wished his destruction. Hindoos and Mussulmans agreed in praying to Heaven for the fall of his power, night and day. Often does the midnight sigh of the widow ruin the riches of an hundred years.

[Scott, *A Translation of the Memoirs of Eradat Khan*, 80–81.]

REBELLING AGAINST THE MUGHALS: THE SIKHS

The Sikh tradition was founded in the Punjab by Nanak (1469–1539), always referred to by his followers as Guru Nanak. His teaching is found, along with that of his successors, in the collection known as the *Adi Granth*, selections from which are given in volume 1. For Guru Nanak, God is eternal, unchanging, beyond time, wholly apart from his creation. According to what is known as the root mantra, this message of Guru Nanak is that “the ancient truth, ageless truth, is also, now, truth. And Nanak says, It always will be truth.”⁴ He gathered followers around him, and by the beginning of the seventeenth century they formed a sizable community in the Punjab that lived in some tension with the Mughal rulers because they were becoming “a state within a state,” following their revered leaders, Guru Nanak’s successors in the office of Guru. As members of a community with easily identified symbols—uncut hair, distinctive

turbans, a sword, an iron bracelet, and shorts under their outer clothing—they emphasized their separateness. By the early eighteenth century they had become identified as militant enemies of the Mughals. The following selections suggest how they became rebels, feared and hated by the Mughals; but they perceived themselves as a community devoted to a religion of truth for which they were persecuted and which they had to defend.

MUHAMMAD QASIM ON BANDA BAHADUR'S SIKH ARMY

Hostility between the Sikhs and the Mughals was dramatized when the emperor Aurangzeb, alarmed at the growth and strength of the Sikh community, ordered the execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru, in 1675. His son and successor, Govind Singh, who is regarded by Sikhs as the last in the line instituted by Guru Nanak, was assassinated in 1708 in South India, probably by imperial order. Two of his sons had already been executed in the Punjab by the Mughals, and he had not named a successor, as had the previous nine Gurus. In this situation, the Sikhs chose a recent convert to Sikhism from a Hindu sect to go back to the Punjab and wreak vengeance on the Mughals. Renamed Banda, “slave” (that is, “slave of the truth”), he gathered an army of Sikh followers, sacking towns held by the Mughals and fighting so successfully against the Mughal armies that after five years he controlled large areas of the Punjab. The Mughal authority managed to get an effective army together, and Banda and the Sikhs were defeated. Banda was captured in 1716, taken in chains to Delhi, and executed along with his five-year-old son. A merchant of the East India Company, who was in Delhi at the time, reported that while a hundred Sikhs were being executed every day not one of them apostasized from his religion.

This is the background of the following selections from the *Ibratnāma*, written in Persian by the historian Muhammad Qasim in 1723. It is remarkable for its praise of Guru Nanak and his religious teachings, along with demeaning references to Banda and his followers. Behind the conventions of Persian rhetoric, these excerpts suggest the increasing weakness of the imperial institution. Some of the passages have been rearranged to create a chronological sequence.

To give the main particulars: In old times in a particular year, there was a dervish by the name of Nānak, clothed in Reality, rooted in Knowledge, endowed with spiritual perfections, rising above physical repute and name. He regarded following the constraints of the threads of Infidelity as absolute Infidelity, and held full obedience to the faith of Islām as Islām. On the one hand, he conversed on the secret virtues of fast and prayer with [Muslim] mystics, scholars and learned men, and, on the other, went in step with the Veda-reading, Reality-comprehending Brahmins. . . . [A]midst the mass of contradictory elements, he was in every way free from [matters of] peace-and-strife. . . .

In previous pages, it has been mentioned, that a false *Gurū* [Bandā], who, during the reign of His Late Majesty Emperor Bahādur Shāh Ghāzī, owing to

the weakness of the unachieving Rustam-dil [the imperial commander] and others, who had been slow in his pursuit, was able to wander about in the plains of ignominy and flee into the Northern Mountains. . . .

When the Imperial Camp was pitched in the . . . hunting ground of [Jahan-gir] and [Shāhjahān], that ill-fated falcon of a fox [Bandā Bahādur] fled into the fort of Mukhlis̄pūr . . . [The Emperor], with relaxed mind, sat in luxury and comfort, while deputing the forces of the princes and nobles to storm the fort and kill the Infidels. Young men exhibited bravery to the extent of their strength and power. But the stormy winds, destructive floods . . . and the bitterness of the cold rendered men and horses useless and weak. . . . The period of the siege extended to two months. What stratagem and stroke did not come to that deceitful deceiver [Bandā]! At last owing to the disloyalty of some of the persons of the Imperial entrenchments, he made his luckless way in one direction, and going . . . to the hills of Jammū raised a tumult there. . . .

Now, owing to the good fortune of the victorious Emperor [Farrukh Siyar, 1713–1719], the time of that ill-fated one was near. . . .

I, the writer of these warning-laden pages, was then by way of service, posted under the Deputy-Governor. . . . What bold actions were then seen from those doomed ones [the Sikhs]! Every day, twice or thrice, forty or fifty of those black-faced ones would come out [of their fort] and from outside carry back fodder for their animals. Every time men of this [Imperial] army . . . tried to stop them, they cut the Mughals down with arrows, muskets and short arms, and went on their way. . . .

But God's mercy did not desert [the Mughals; they did not have to storm the fort]. . . . At last, owing to a number of causes, such as their confinement, the maddening stench of carcasses and putrid matter, the exhaustion of their store of grain and their dying of starvation, those wicked infidels came down to pleading with importunity and helplessness and made the offer that their base chief would [surrender] . . .

A fateful order was issued for the execution of the *Gurū*, his son, and the other sweepers [the Sikhs].

[*Ibratnāma*, trans. I. Habib in *Sikh History from Persian Sources: Translations of Major Texts*, ed. J. S. Grewal and Irfan Habib (New Delhi: Tulika, 2001), 111–112, 122–123, 125–127.]

THE SIKH RELIGIOUS CODE: LIVES OF DISCIPLINE AND DEVOTION

The Sikhs as pictured by their enemies may seem to bear no relation to the Sikhs as pictured in their own religious literature, which breathes a spirit of devotion. As with many religious traditions, however, the truth of one's faith may become, in the eyes of one's enemies, fanaticism and bigotry. Sikhism is defined by devotion to the Gurus, especially the originator of the community, Guru Nanak; by reverence for the scrip-

ture, the *Granth Sāhib*; and by adherence to a code of devotion, social behavior, and discipline.

The code of devotion is embodied in what is known as the *rahit*, of which there are a number of versions, called *rahit-nāmās*. A few excerpts are given from what is believed by scholars to be one of the earliest extant versions, the *Chauṡā Singh Rahit-nāmā*, dating, according to some scholars, from early in the eighteenth century. Like many religious codes, it is intended to define and identify the true believers, who accept the rigorous discipline of the faith.

By the grace of the Eternal One, the True Guru

The text which follows is the *Rahit* [or pattern of conduct] prescribed by the Satguru. What is the *Rahit*? The *Granth Sahib* tells us: If one follows the *Rahit* that disease [which is separation from God] progressively diminishes. . . . In the early morning the Gursikh [a devout Sikh] . . . should bathe or [at least] perform the five ablutions. Let him then recite *Japṡī* [thirty-eight short poems at the beginning of the *Ādi Granth* that are considered the core statement of faith] five times. According to Guru Ram Das he who recites *Japṡī* five times will acquire the radiance of [true] enlightenment . . . The Gursikh should then turn to whatever daily occupation is appropriate to the status conferred on him by the Guru. . . . When it is time to eat give a portion of your food to someone else, as you are able to afford. Invite another Sikh to sit with you in the place where you prepare your food [and share whatever you have with him]. . . . A Gursikh should not drink intoxicating liquor. As the *Granth Sahib* says: He who drinks dislodges his reason and becomes demented. . . . A Gursikh should not stare at another's wife and he should never have intercourse with any woman other [than his own wife]. . . . A Gursikh . . . should not cherish worldly things, and he should always be in complete control of his temper. . . . A Gursikh should be strictly loyal to his own dharma and should not endeavour to follow another's [way].

[*Chauṡā Singh Rahit-nama*, trans. and ed. W. H. McLeod (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1987), 149, 150, 153, 155, from vv. 1, 2, 7, 11, 44, 65.]

MARATHAS: COURTIERS, REBELS, RAIDERS, AND STATE BUILDERS

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Indian nationalists would see the Marathas as Indian patriots and freedom fighters, but in the selections given here they appear in many forms. At times they were courtiers at the Mughal courts; at other times they rebelled, contributing to the weakness of the empire through their invasion of the Punjab, Delhi, and other parts of the empire. They were also seen as plunderers of peasants and merchants throughout India.

THE HISTORY OF KHAFI KHAN AND THE STORY OF TARA BAI

Khafi Khan, an early eighteenth-century historian who was brought up in Aurangzeb's political and diplomatic service, wrote a history of India from Babur through the death of Aurangzeb and beyond. The *Tārīkh-i Khāfi Khān* was published in 1732 during the time of Muhammad Shah and gives an account of one of the most prominent Maratha chieftains of the early part of the century, Nima Sindhia [Shinde], that suggests the complex relationships between the Mughal rulers and their local allies, who were often Hindus, not Muslims. His history also indicates the important political role of women in Maratha society in his reference to the story of Tara Bai (1675–1761), the widow of the Maratha ruler Raja Ram (who was a descendant of the great Shivaji, founder of the dynasty). Along with Ahilya Bai Holkar, she is one of the heroines of Maratha history. Tara Bai acted as regent for her infant son, and took the lead in attacking the imperial territories in the Deccan. Although Aurangzeb gave a favorable reply to Tara Bai's request for permission to augment her income through a special tax, she became enmeshed in court politics, and the *farmān* promised to her was never issued.

Nīmā Sindhiā had been one . . . of the greatest leaders of the accursed armies of the Dakhin. His plundering and destructive raids had extended as far as the province of Mālwā. Now . . . he had turned the face of repentance to the Imperial throne, with the hope of forgiveness. He had taken part in the battle against Kām Bakhsh [the brother of the emperor, Bahādūr Shāh, who had tried to seize the throne], and having thus won the Imperial favour, he and his sons and relations had received the honour of being presented to His Majesty. He received a *mansab* [revenue for maintaining troops] of 7,000 and 5,000 horse, two *lacs* of rupees, a robe, and elephant, a drum, etc. . . . His sons and grandsons each received *mansabs* of 5,000 and 4,000—altogether 40,000 and 25,000 horse. . . .

Tārā Bāī was the widow of Rām Rāja . . . [who had] left two sons by her of tender years. In the reign of the late Emperor Aurangzeb, after a warfare of ten years, she sued for peace, on condition of being allowed to levy [a special tax]. . . . Aurangzeb declined for various reasons. Now, by the intervention of [a Mughal official], she asked for a *farmān* [order from the emperor] in the name of her son, granting [a special tax], for which he would suppress other insurgents and restore order in the country. . . . The King, in his extreme good nature, had resolved in his heart that he would not reject the petition of anyone, whether of high or low degree. The complainants and the defendants made their statements to His Majesty, and although they differed as much as morning and evening, each was accepted, and an order of consent was given.

[Khāfi Khān, *Tārīkh-i Khāfi Khān*, in *The History of India, As Told by Its Own Historians: The Mohammedan Period*, ed. Sir H. M. Elliot and John Dowson (London: Trübner and Co., 1877), vol. 7, 408–409.]

AHILYA BAI HOLKAR: A MARATHA WOMAN RULER

The reputation of the Marathas as marauders is complicated by the story of one of the most remarkable women in Indian history, Ahilya Bai (r. 1765–1795), who on the death of her son, the ruler of the important Maratha state of Indore, gained control of the government because, as Sir John Malcolm, an English official who knew her, remarked, the men around her recognized her abilities even though they objected to her sex as “a disqualification for the conducting of public affairs.” The Holkar family is a good example of the rise of new groups to power in the eighteenth century. They were shepherds, who turned from raising sheep to raising a body of armed men in order to gain territory.

The following description of her reign, by Sir John Malcolm, the commander of the British forces in western India, is accepted by modern historians as reliable, although his comments about the derivation of female seclusion must be recognized as part of nineteenth-century rhetoric.

It is not common with the Hindus (unless in those provinces where they have learnt the degrading usage from their Mahomedan conquerors) to confine females, or to compel them to wear veils. The Mahrattas of rank (even the Brahmins) have, with few exceptions, rejected the custom, which is not prescribed by any of their religious institutions. Ahalya Bae, therefore, offended no prejudice, when she took upon herself the direct management of affairs, and sat every day for a considerable period, in open Durbar, transacting business. Her first principle of government appears to have been moderate assessment, and an almost sacred respect for the native rights of village officers and proprietors of land. She heard every complaint in person; and although she continually referred causes to courts of equity and arbitration, and to her ministers, for settlement, she was always accessible; and so strong was her sense of duty, on all points connected with the distribution of justice, that she is represented as not only patient, but unwearied, in the investigation of the most insignificant causes, when appeals were made to her decision.

Aware of the partiality which was to be expected from information supplied by members and adherents of the Holkar family, regarding Ahalya Bae, facts were collected from other quarters to guard against the impressions, which the usual details of her administration are calculated to make. It was thought the picture had been overcharged with bright colours, to bring it more into contrast with the opposite system that has since prevailed in the countries she formerly governed; but, although enquiries have been made among all ranks and classes, nothing has been discovered to diminish the eulogiums, or rather blessings, which are poured forth whenever her name is mentioned. The more, indeed, enquiry is pursued, the more admiration is excited: but it appears above all extraordinary, how she had mental and bodily powers to go through with the labours she imposed upon herself, and which from the age of thirty to that of

sixty when she died, were unrelenting. The hours gained from the affairs of the state were all given to acts of devotion and charity; and a deep sense of religion appears to have strengthened her mind in the performance of her worldly duties. She used to say, that she “deemed herself answerable to God for every exercise of power;” and in the full spirit of a pious and benevolent mind was wont to exclaim, when urged by her ministers to acts of extreme severity, “Let us, mortals, beware how we destroy ‘the works of the Almighty.’”

[Sir John Malcolm, *A Memoir of Central India* (London: Kingsbury, Parbury, and Allen, 1832), 1:175–177.]

THE MARATHAS AS RAIDERS: A BENGALI PERSPECTIVE

A reaction to Marathas as raiders and invaders in Bengal is given in a remarkable Bengali document written by one Gangaram in about 1752. It is one of the very few extended references from the point of view of the victims. One somewhat extenuating explanation for the invasion is that the Marathas were asked by the imperial administration to punish the governor of Bengal because he had not remitted the emperor's share of the Bengal taxes to Delhi. For Gangaram, no explanation was necessary beyond the sinful greed of the invaders.

“Bargis” is the word the local people used for the Marathas, and seems to have meant “cavalry.”

But then suddenly the Bargis swept down with a great shout and surrounded the people in the fields. They stole all their gold and silver, leaving all other things aside. They cut off the hands of some, and the noses and ears of others. Some they cut down with a single blow. They seized and dragged off the most beautiful of the women, who tried to flee, and tied ropes around their fingers and necks. When one had finished with a woman, another took her, while the raped women screamed for help. The Bargis did many foul and bestial things to the women, and then let them go. Then, when they had plundered all they could in the fields, they entered the villages and set fire to houses . . . large and small. They destroyed whole villages and swept, looting, into all the four directions. They bound some people, their hands behind their backs, others they threw to the ground and while they were on their backs on the ground, kicked them with shoes [a special insult]. They shouted over and over again, “Give us money!”, and when they got no money they filled peoples' nostrils with water, and some they seized and drowned in tanks, and many died of suffocation. In this way they did all manner of foul and evil deeds. When they demanded money and it was not given to them, they would put the man to death. Those who had money gave it. Those who had none were killed.

[Gangārām, *The Mahārāshṭa [sic] Purāna: An Eighteenth Century Bengal Historical Text*, trans. and ed. Edward C. Dimock Jr. and Pratul Chandra Gupta (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1965), 30.]

FORTS AND WAR: THE ESSENTIAL FEATURES
OF ANY KINGDOM

Intrigues, assassinations, diplomacy, alliances, battles: all are the stock-in-trade of our sources from the eighteenth century. Maratha leaders, the most mobile and most farthest-ranging of all the Indian powers of the eighteenth century, were aware, however, that forts on well-guarded hills were essential to their power.

A Maratha writer, in a manuscript said to have been composed early in the century, elaborates on the strategic advantage of Shivaji's forts.

Forts are the essence of the entire kingdom. If there are no forts then the country is open to foreign attack, the people have no refuge and abandon it. If the land is abandoned then who would call it a kingdom? It is for this reason that preceding kings began by building forts that consolidated their power and enabled them to withstand invasions.

The great king who is in heaven [Shivājī] built this kingdom on the basis of forts. When new lands fell under his rule, he selected choice spots for both land and sea fortifications. Step by step he created a well-controlled realm from Saleri and Ahivant [in the western Khandesh region of Maharashtra] up to the Kaveri River. A powerful enemy like Aurangzeb came and overran great kingdoms like Bijapur and Bhaganagar [Golkunda]; he attacked this kingdom for thirty to thirty-five years. What indeed was impossible for him? But because this kingdom had fortresses a remnant of it survived, and so did the possibility of future recovery.

If a king wishes to protect his kingdom and enlarge it, he should not neglect his own forts but should carefully strengthen them. In conquering new territory, great efforts should be made to capture its strongholds. If the land has no forts, then strong points should be taken and fortified, and the advance should proceed step by step with that. The land should be annexed only after posting garrisons in such places. Thus the kingdom should be enlarged step by step. A kingdom without forts is in a dark situation. Therefore one who desires a kingdom should take to heart that forts *are* the kingdom, forts are the roots of the kingdom, forts are treasuries, forts are military strength, forts are the glory of the realm, forts are lifeguards. Knowing this, he should not trust anyone and should take personal care to guard the fortresses that exist and construct new ones.

The protection of forts is a delicate task. If one is lost due to the treason, or carelessness or cowardice of the men appointed to command there, then a piece of territory is also gone. The remaining territory is exposed to attack, the enemy grows stronger, and garrison soldiers elsewhere are exposed to temptation and may intrigue with the enemy. So the kingdom suffers blow after blow. For this reason, do not treat the administration of forts as a matter of routine business: enforce the strictest adherence to rules and regulations.

[Shyamakanta N. Banhatti, ed., *Ajnapatra* (Pune: Suvichar Prakashan Mandala, 1986), 101–102. Trans. S. Guha.]

THE REALITY OF WAR FOR A COMMON SOLDIER

In India, as elsewhere, the hardships of war were borne by the men who attacked the forts. This selection comes from a collection of folk poetry; in it a soldier complains, as soldiers have from time immemorial, that that he has to fight in a battle he does not understand, in Karnataka, far from his homeland.

Eyes roll [in shock] gazing on the forts of Bahiravgad and Mangdi!
 The forest around them is impenetrable!
 Like a woodland preserved for a god!
 The impetuous (chief) took the surrounding forts—but now came this
 fearsome forest!
 Spectacular losses were our losses when it was attacked!
 The fort did much harm (to us).
 Cannon-balls crippled many—left them fit only to beg! But it was
 taken in the end.
 Our guts swell with flatulence! We watch our life-breath depart!
 while saying “How did we earn this fate?”
 Dysentery is tormenting us! Our assholes froth away! Terrible the heat
 of Karnataka!
 When reminded of home we weep like children! How we remember
 our children and families!
 O Hari! From today seek no employment in Karnataka! Till your fields
 and live at home!
 Here we eat sand at the risk of our lives, our bodies suffer! Food
 is dear indeed!

[*Marathyaneya Itihasancin Asadhanen*, Khand 3, ed. V. K. Rajwade
 (Kolhapur: V. K. Rajwade, 1901), doc. 109, vv. 2–5, 93–94. Trans. S. Guha.]

THE CHRONICLE OF BHAUSAHIB: DEFEAT IN 1761
OF THE MARATHAS AT PANIPAT

The defeat of the Maratha armies in 1761 at Panipat, north of Delhi, is a crucial event in eighteenth-century history. It prevented the Marathas, who had gained control of Delhi in 1752, from establishing themselves in North India. Instead, they were forced to return to their bases in central and western India. This defeat was brought about, however, not by the forces of the Mughal emperor but by the Afghan invader Ahmad Shah Abdali (to whom Shah Wali Allah had appealed [see above]). This account of the battle was written in Marathi in the late eighteenth century and is centered on one of the Maratha leaders, Bhausahib. There are many chronicles of this kind in Marathi that give a vivid insight into the nature of war and society at the time. One explanation offered in some of them for the defeat at Panipat is that the Marathas had abandoned their own method of fighting—that is, using swift cut-and-run engage-

ments on horseback—for “the Muslim way” of fighting pitched infantry battles using muskets. Another is that while the rank-and-file fought bravely on the battlefield, the leaders in Maharashtra were disunited and quarreled amongst themselves.

Meanwhile Visaji Krishna Jogdeo had been assigned five hundred [soldiers] in order to take care of Parvatibai [Bhausaheb’s wife] and a bodyguard of mounted Bargirs set to protect her, and they had been thus ordered: “If it becomes known that we have fought our way through, then bringing her set off behind us in the direction of Delhi. And if the news is heard that we have fallen in the field then straightway slay her and yourselves depart.” Thus were they told: “You should effect it so that it may never be said that the wife of Bhausaheb had fallen into the hands of Giljyas [Afghans].” With these most definite commands they had been placed on guard. Then came the rout and men began to flee. At that time Visaji Krishna and his men took fright and abandoning all concern for the lady fled who knows where in the hope of saving their lives. Nothing took place as Bhausaheb had ordered. Now one half hour only of the day remained and Parvatibai, who was in her howdah, caused the elephant to lie, got down from it and began to run in the direction of the baggage train. She was entirely distracted. A boy of the household was standing there holding a led mare for her but Baisaheb was too much besides herself to mount it. But there was also a body-servant named Janu Bhintada nearby who courageously had kept her company. In such a tumult he was . . . a powerful man and his mare also strong and broad of back. She came up to him and said, “I am the wife of Bhausaheb. Take me on your horse.” As soon as she said this he being a fine man answered her steadfastly, “Baisaheb, do you place your foot on my stirrup and mount.” Immediately she put her foot on the stirrup and that good man gave her his hand and set her behind him, then with her own shawl bound her to his waist. When he looked all around them, all around were Giljyas. Before and behind he saw heaps of dead. He said to the lady, “Baisaheb, it seems very difficult for us to come off safe, but through your former merit we will outrun them yet.” So saying he lowered his head and drove his horse out from the rest of the troop. The lady’s virtues were great for she came safely through that dreadful calamity. The day set. The Giljyas pursued them a full kos [2.2 miles] but she escaped from this calamity. The mother of Nana Phadnis who had come on pilgrimage to the holy Bhagirathi was taken by the Giljyas. It is not known what became of her after. Nana Phadnis himself was only young. In the confusion he fled away and avoiding capture returned with the stragglers. Nana’s wife was there also. After coming away from the battlefield she abandoned her horse. On foot and in ragged clothes, having thrown away all her jewelry and ornaments and smeared earth upon her body, she went in the direction of Delhi. . . .

It happened as always when one part of an army flees the other loses courage, and they began to run from there too in whatever direction they could find a path. Those whose horses had any strength left in them managed to cross the

ditches and went into the city of Panipat and from there fled in whatever direction they could. . . . The Giljyas who were cutting off heads gave up their lopping. For how long could they continue? Of the broken army as many as could went to Delhi, a few others to Kurukshetra and a few by back ways and side roads wherever they might, but none of these escaped. They were taken by the Giljyas. At the same time the Giljyas, putting the city of Panipat under their control, began to loot all the goods within the entrenchments. The women they carried off and some they slew and likewise for the men.

The battle which began in the morning after two hours of day went on at full cry unceasingly for three watches. The earth drank much blood. No Hindus had ever fought like this nor been broken like this before. There had never been such a time, nor ever would be. Well let that be! It was God's doing. It was he that brought about this wonder in that he led all the peoples of the earth to that place and there slew them. Maratha men and troops had been defeated but never died like this. Had any of them ever dug entrenchments all around and remained within them in this way? Maratha men had never done this thing. The old Marathi system of war, followed from ancient times, had been to fight only when the occasion was fair and otherwise to flee. By doing this they had protected the land. When they abandoned this way and depended upon the Muslim system it was not their true way and so this . . . came about and many men and women of the southern land were destroyed. God's power is the only truth, and thus it came about! . . . Then having obtained brahman Marathas and the very best materials for the proper performance of the rite of fire, he had the bodies burned and also dispatched the bones to Benares. . . .

[Quoted in Ian Raeside, *The Decade of Panipat, 1751–1761* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1984), 945–996.]

TIPU SULTAN: VISIONARY RULER OF MYSORE

Of all the new leaders who emerged in the eighteenth century, Tipu Sultan, who succeeded his father Haidar Ali in 1782 as ruler of Mysore, was one of the most interesting and powerful. He understood, as did his father, that the real threat to his power, and that of other Indian rulers, came from the British, who were gaining control of Bengal and large areas in South India. Contemporary British sources depicted him as a bloodthirsty tyrant who must be overthrown for the benefit of the trade of their East India Company and for the welfare of the people of Mysore. Recent historiography, however, has pictured him as a farsighted ruler who sought to protect his territory from the British through skillful diplomacy and by building up the economic resources of his government. He saw the need to modernize the state through acquiring new technology, starting new industries, and carefully controlling the revenue system. To this end he sought alliances with both Indian and foreign states, including, much to the alarm of the British, the French.

A remarkable series of letters, some of them apparently in his own handwriting, articulate Tipu Sultan's vision of a new kind of Indian state. He was killed in battle by British troops in 1799. The selections here are from the detailed instructions he prepared for envoys to the Ottoman Empire (anachronistically called Turkey in this translation), France, and England.

The particulars of every stage of journey and [leading] members of each of the three States [Turkey, France and England], with indications of status of the said [leading] members and description of their affairs as discovered [by you] and the industries and rarities of each city and territory and the account of the affairs of the cities, should be written down in front of each of you, in the hand of both the said *munshis* [scribes] and by the Persian-writing . . . [officials], each in a separate book. Requests should be made in the proper and necessary manner to the Sultan of Turkey and the King of France, for obtaining artisans expert in the manufacture of muskets, guns, clocks, glass, mirrors, chinaware, and cannon-balls, and for such other craftsmen as may be there. You should engage [and bring back with you] such numerous artisans. Apart from them, you should give advances to [other] artisans of the said categories, obtaining from them bonds of agreement to come to this Court, which you should bring with you. . . .

If any of the three said Rulers enquire as to what goods are deemed better and may be acceptable as presents in your country, you should answer that by the Grace of God everything is available there, but better craftsmen and gifts of muskets and guns, glass, clocks, chinaware, are in demand, and may be given to us to be carried home. . . .

In that country [Turkey], there is plenty of stone-coal. The stone-coal may be obtained free or at a price in exchange for the *nilam* stone and sand, which is put aboard ships as ballast; and the stone-coal should be put aboard ships at the time of your return.

As many Turks and Mughal soldiers as may be available should be engaged by making advances of Rupees 10 to 11 to the soldiers per head, and Rupees 50 to 60 to their captains per head, and they be sent with Muhammad Hanif so that he may bring them to this Court. . . .

Copy of the Letter of Authority for Concluding a Treaty with the King of France. By the will of God, authority is hereby given in regard to the obtaining and giving of written agreement, comprising five clauses, from and to the King of France, as detailed below, so that till the Sun and Moon endure, the bond of friendship and unity between this Government and the King of France should prosper day by day.

Clause I: To wage war against the English, agreement is made that until the taking of the fort of Madras along with the country of Carnatic, the other ports and Bombay and Bengal, together with its dependencies, the two [contracting] rulers will not make peace with the English. If this matter prolongs for ten

years, peace should still not be concluded, however much during this period the English should show submissiveness and entreaty, and give satisfactory assurance of acceptance of terms. Peace with them should not be made until the said forts and places are (actually) taken over.

Clause II: Ten thousand Europeans [“hat-wearers”] with war-trying high commanders should be dispatched [from France]. If they arrive at Pondicherry or Calicut or elsewhere in any part of the country of this Government, then, after having assisted them to land, this Government would provide them oxen for drawing artillery pieces and grain for food, according to need, together with tents, gun-powder, and cannon balls.

Clause III: The French Commanders, with their army, should be under the authority of this Government in all matters of war strategy, march and halt. If anyone commits an offence, he shall be punished in justice according to his offence. The servants of this Government and the French would be under one authority, and must recognize the same, single master.

Clause IV: After the conquest of the entire country of Carnatic and the fort of Madras, whatever is attached of old as *jagir* [small territory] to the fort of Pondicherry, that, together with the port of Madras and the country attached to it of old, and, in addition, other ports on the sea-coast of that side, should be given over to the French Commander for the King of France. The fort of Trichinapalli, Thanjavur, etc., in the country of Carnatic, which has been in the possession of Muslims from olden days, would be given over to the custody of the servants of this Government. . . .

Twelve eunuchs of nine or ten years, of the Abyssinian race or any other, should be purchased and brought back. In case they are available in Jedda or (elsewhere) on the way, they should be bought and sent to Muhammad Hanif, for him to send them to this Court. Whatever expenditure is incurred in the purchase of the said eunuchs, should be paid out of the Government money.

[“The Diplomatic Vision of Tipu Sultan: Briefs for Embassies to Turkey and France, 1785–8,” in *State and Diplomacy Under Tipu Sultan: Documents and Essays*, ed. Irfan Habib (New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2001), 29, 32, 33–35.]

THE INFLUENCE OF COMMERCE

The second trend throughout the century is the emergence to new positions of influence of various previously subordinate groups in different regions of India. These included zamindars, or landlords, men of rank and property with roots in the countryside who assumed functions of state power, especially collection of taxes for the Mughals and the creation of private armies as central authority weakened. Among Hindu merchants, the wealthy family known as the Jagat Seths, who had originated in Rajasthan, came to Bengal in the eighteenth century and made a fortune in the silk trade; as bankers to the nawab they also be-

came important in political life. Such merchants were essential elements in the East India Company's establishment in Bengal. Decentralization of political power meant increased economic and political power for merchants and bankers in most of the successor states, in and beyond Bengal.

***BANKERS AND TRADERS:
THE POWERS BEHIND THE THRONES***

In contrast to Mysore, where Tipu Sultan tried to keep trade and commerce under strict control, in other territories bankers and merchants were able to operate fairly independently. They were especially important in Bengal, in financial dealings with the nawabs, the representatives of the Mughal emperors, and the East India Company. Bankers and merchants were very secretive in their dealings, for good reason, since in the eighteenth century they were plundered or forced to give loans to rulers contending for power. The East India Company could not have established itself without the brokers of various kinds, under a variety of designations, described here.

There are a good many Delals or brokers, who have no capital engaged in trade, and live by making bargains for others. In Patna they have the shopkeepers under a good deal of subjection, and scarcely any purchase, even to the value of one rupee, can be made without their interference, and of course they enhance the price by the amount of their commission. It is of no use ordering them to go away, because they stand at the door and receive the commission when you go. . . .

At Behar there are a kind of brokers called Goldars, who must be carefully distinguished from the merchants of the same name. The Goldars of the town of Behar have no capital, except a warehouse and a set of weights, with which they accommodate those who employ them as agents, either to buy or sell. They receive a commission of from one-quarter to one set of grain on every rupee's worth that they sell. . . .

Some bankers at Gaya and Daudnagar . . . grant bills for cash on Patna and Benares, charging half per cent on the former, and one per cent on the latter. They will also give money for good bills drawn on them from these two cities, but do not discount. At Patna are 24 proper bankers (Kothiwalas), and one of them has a house at Gaya. They will all discount bills, payable either here or at Calcutta, Benares, and Moorshedabad. Some of them have also agents at Lucknow and Dhaka, one has an agent in Nepal, and the house of Jagat Seth has agents at Madras and Bombay in the south, and at all great towns within the Company's protection; but it has, I am told, withdrawn all the factories from the places under native anarchy. . . .

The Surrafs here exchange money, and purchase and sell bullion. . . . Many of the Surrafs have very petty capitals, and merely exchange silver and copper. In Patna, Gaya, and Behar, where their capitals are above 400 rupees, they will

exchange gold and silver. . . . The rich Surrafs and the Kothiwal supply the Zemindars, and pay the revenue, which operation is now their chief support.

[Notes by travelers; from Montgomery Martin, *The History, Antiquities, Topography, and Statistics of Eastern India* (London: W. H. Allen, 1838), 380–381.]

“BUSINESS MEN ARE THE GLORY AND ORNAMENT OF THE KINGDOM”

A remarkable document from early in the eighteenth century maintains that merchants are essential to political power, but it also shows an awareness by the Indian rulers of the danger from foreign merchants. It was written in response to an order by the Maratha chieftain Shambhu, son of the great Shivaji.

Businessmen are the glory and ornament of the kingdom. By their presence the kingdom becomes prosperous and populous. Unavailable things come into it. If the kingdom is prosperous, loans are available in times of crisis to avert the emergency. There is much advantage to be gained by protecting merchants. For this reason, honor businessmen. Do not let them be harassed or insulted in any way. In every market town encourage the establishment of shops and agencies dealing in elephants, horses, gold and gems, jewelry, fine wool, and other things of that nature, pearls, weapons, and encourage trade in the innumerable range of commodities. Settle the greatest businessmen in the capital's bazaar. Keep them happy by inviting them to seasonal festivals as well as weddings and other celebrations and giving them gifts of clothing and ornaments at such times. Encourage bankers from other kingdoms to immigrate. If this is impossible for them, still seek to conciliate them, send for their agents, and give them suitable sites for their establishments. In the same way, issue safe-guards to sea-borne merchants in other ports and encourage them to come and go from your kingdom.

The *Firangi* [Portuguese], *Ingrez* [English], *Valandez* [Dutch], *Farasis* [French], *Dingmar* [Danes], and other hat-wearers [*topikar*] also trade. But they are not like other merchants. They each have a king as their master. It is by their king's wish and command that they come to these countries to trade. Has a ruler who is not greedy for territory ever been known? Their ultimate ambition is to infiltrate these lands, increase their territory and establish their faith. This has been done in several places. Furthermore, they are an obstinate caste; they do not abandon a place they have taken even if it cost them their lives. So let them come and go, but do not give them any fixed place. Absolutely do not let them frequent the vicinity of islands. If they need a place for warehouses, then do not let it be on the shore-line. If they are allowed to settle permanently on such sites, then they may observe the rules as they choose, but their strength lies in artillery and naval power. Backed by these, they build a new fort at that har-

bor, and that land is permanently lost to the kingdom. So if they are to be allotted sites, they should be away from deep water, and in a few places such as the site given to the French at Rajapur. Sites should be in specified large towns like that. Even though the factory might be on a low-lying site, dependent on the city for supplies, unable to harass the city—even there do not allow strongly built buildings. If they agree to all this, it is good; if not, they are not needed. Let their comings and goings be peaceful: that is enough.

If businessmen from an enemy realm are captured in raids, then take appropriate ransoms. Hold them until paid; then entertain them a little and send them honorably back to their own country. The punishments inflicted on servants of an enemy king should not be used on merchants.

[Shyamakanta N. Banhatti, ed., *Ajnapatra* (Pune: Suvichar Prakashan Mandala, 1986), ch. 5, 89–91. Trans. S. Guha.]

ANANDA RANGA PILLAI: MERCHANT AND AGENT OF THE FRENCH

The ports along the coasts where European traders established their bases attracted many Indian merchants who saw opportunities in trading with the Europeans. Ananda Ranga Pillai (1709–1761) was one such entrepreneur. He rose to a position of influence as chief agent for the traders of the French East India Company at Pondichery [the translation maintains the French spelling]. Thanks to the diary he kept for twenty-five years—discovered in its original Tamil only in 1846, at which time it was translated first into French, and then into English in 1896—we have insight into his views of François Dupleix, governor of the Company's commercial operations. Dupleix apparently envisaged trade as leading to territorial control before his rivals in the British East India Company did, and Pillai, in line with his own commercial interest, often praised him fulsomely, while writing contemptuously of the leadership of his rival, the head of the English company at Madras.

In this selection from the diary, he is writing about the struggle between the French and British in India for both commercial and military advantage that was just beginning in 1744–1748. Pillai chose the losing side (the French government disapproved of Dupleix's military activities and recalled him in disgrace), but Pillai's views provide an interesting contrast to those of the Maratha political leader quoted above who saw the potential danger from foreign interlopers at a critical moment in Indian history.

The English have captured the ships bound for Pondichery, and have received a reinforcement of men-of-war from England and other places. This accounts for their activity; nevertheless they are much troubled owing to their leader, the governor, being a worthless fellow, and a man devoid of wisdom. Although Pondichery receives no ships, her government lacks funds, the enemy has seized

her vessels, she is feeble and wanting in strength, and her inhabitants are in misery; although she has all these disadvantages, no sooner is mention made of her than the nawabs, and other magnates in the interior, become alarmed. When her name [the French Company] is uttered, her enemies tremble, and dare not stir. All this is owing to the ability, readiness, and luck of the present governor, M. Dupleix. His method of doing things is not known to any one, because none else is possessed of the quick mind with which he is gifted. In patience he has no equal. He has peculiar skill in carrying out his plans and designs; in the management of affairs, and in governing; in fitting his advice to times and persons; in maintaining at all times an even countenance; in doing things through proper agents; in addressing them in appropriate terms; and in assuming a bearing at once dignified and courteous towards all. . . . Owing to these qualities, he has acquired such a reputation as to make all people say that he is the master, and that others are useless individuals. Because God has favored him with unswerving resolution, and because he is governing Pondichery on an occasion when she is threatened with danger, her inhabitants are confident and fearless, and are even able to defy the people of towns opposed to them. This is due solely to the skill and administrative ability of the governor. If he did not occupy this position, and if the danger had occurred in the times of his predecessors, the inhabitants of this city would be a hundred times more disturbed and terrified than the followers of the invader: such is the general opinion regarding M. Dupleix. Besides this, if his courage, character, bearing, greatness of mind, and skill in the battlefield, were put to the test, he could be compared only with the Emperor Aurangzib, and Louis XIV; and not with any other monarch. But how am I to paint all his high and praiseworthy characteristics? I have described him only so far as my simple mind allows me. People of better capacity could do this more completely than I.

[Ananda Ranga Pillai, *The Private Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, ed. J. F. Price (Madras: Government Press, 1904), 1:299–300.]

GHULAM HUSAIN KHAN: THE NAWAB OF BENGAL, THE MARATHAS, AND THE JAGAT SETHS

The importance of merchants and bankers to rulers who were struggling for power is suggested in a history of the eighteenth century written in Persian by Ghulam Husain Khan (b. 1727). His biographical details are a comment on the period. His ancestors had been high officials in the Mughal Empire; his cousin, Alivardi Khan, was the Mughal governor (called in this translation “Viceroy”) of Bengal from 1740 to 1756, and fought the Marathas to prevent them from taking over Bengal; then he himself ended up working for the East India Company as it took control of Bengal. The Jagat Seth referred to in this selection was the head of the wealthiest family in India, who were bankers to the emperor in Delhi as well as to Alivardi Khan, and later to the East

India Company. Mughals and Marathas alike borrowed and extorted money from such bankers. Mir Habib was a Mughal official who supported the Marathas; loyalties in early modern India were not drawn along “Hindu” or “Muslim” lines.

The proper names are as in the original English translation from Persian (1789), and show how these names were pronounced by the English at the time.

So glorious a retreat could not fail to raise Aaly-verdy-qhan’s character; it overjoyed the hearts of his subjects, and intimidated his enemies. The Marhatta General was alarmed. Matters were now greatly altered. The Viceroy had before him a country abounding with everything that could be wished; and it became problematical even with the enemy, whether an army that had withstood him when struggling through so many difficulties, would not prove now an overmatch for his men? Concluding therefore, that it would be highly difficult now for him to keep his footing in Bengal, especially as the rainy season was set in, [the Marhatta General] had thoughts of returning home through the country of Birbohom. But this was opposed by Mir-habib, who by rendering continual services, and exposing continually his person, had found means to render it respectable, and to speak with authority. That man [Mir-habib] who had come a simple pedlar from Iran, his country, and was so low bred, as to be unable either to write or read, had now by dint of merit and services rendered himself considerable; he had found means to figure as a man fertile in expedients, and a General of much resolution. His animosity against Aaly-verdy-qhan would not allow of his parting with Bengal on so easy terms; and he went so far as to tell the Marhatta General, that if money was his object, he [Mir-habib] would undertake to find a great deal of it for him, and that he requested only the disposal of some thousand Cavalry, with which force he would so far avail himself of Aaly-verdy-qhan’s lying at Catwa, as to advance suddenly to Moorshedabad, which is a city without walls, and without any defence, where by plundering only Jagat Seth’s house, he would bring him money enough to satisfy all his wishes. This advice having been supported by a strong reasoning, Mir-habib was furnished with some thousand picked horse, and he departed immediately on his expedition. But this could not be done so secretly, as that the Viceroy should not have intelligence of it; and as he knew the circumstances of his Capital, and did not trust to the talents of either his brother or nephew for the defence of it, he determined to advance himself to its relief; and he set out directly with much expedition. But Mir-habib having already performed the journey in a single day, was beforehand with him, and he had already plundered Jagat Seth’s house, from whence he carried full two Corors [crores] away, and also a quantity of other goods.

[Ghulam Husain Khan Tabatabai, *S̄̄ir Mutaqherin*
(Lahore: Mubarak Ali, 1975), 1:392–393.]

*ABU TALIB: CULTURAL COMPARISONS,
INDIA VERSUS THE WEST*

Mirza Abu Talib Khan (1752–1806) was born in Lucknow of Persian and Turkish descent, an indication of how cosmopolitan the Indian Muslim upper classes were. He served the Mughal governors of both Bengal and Awadh, but when he lost favor with them, he went to Calcutta, looking for a position with the East India Company. When this failed to materialize, a Scottish friend suggested that they travel to England together, which they did beginning in 1799. He enjoyed his three years in Europe. No sooner had he arrived in London than he was presented to the king and queen, dubbed “the Persian prince,” and lionized by the English aristocracy. He traveled widely and was a careful observer of British life at all levels. His analyses of what he saw as the defects of English character were often to be made later by Indians, from Vivekananda to Iqbal and beyond, who made comparisons between Indian, or “Asiatic” or “Eastern,” and “Western” cultures, usually to declare the moral and cultural superiority of the former. His “Vindication of the Liberties of Asiatic Women” was written in response to what had already become a staple criticism by Westerners of Indian society: that Indian women, in contrast to Western women, were lacking in freedom. Abu Talib wrote in Persian because it was the language of courts and belles lettres throughout the subcontinent at the time.

One day, in a certain company, the conversation turned upon liberty, in respect of which the English consider their own customs the most perfect in the world. An English lady, addressing herself to me, observed, that the women of Asia have no liberty at all, but live like slaves, without honour and authority, in the houses of their husbands; and she censured the men for their unkindness, and the women, also, for submitting to be so undervalued. . . . Since the same wrong opinion is deeply rooted in the minds of all other Europeans, and has been frequently before this held forth, I considered it necessary to write a few lines concerning the privileges of the female sex, as established, both by law and custom in Asia and in Europe.

Those things which make the liberty of the Asiatic women appear less than that of the Europeans, in my opinion, are:

“The little intercourse with men, and concealment from view,” agreeably to law and their own habits: and this is the chief . . . for it has been the cause of those false notions entertained by the European women, that the inclination of the Asiatic women leads them to walk out in the streets and market-places, but that their husbands keep them shut up, and set guards over the door. . . .

“The people here being all of one kind,” for in this kingdom, placed in a corner of the globe where there is no coming and going of foreigners, the intercourse of the sexes is not attended with the consequences of a corruption of manners, as in Asia, where people of various nations dwell in the same city, and

to allow the women such a liberty there, where there is such danger of corruption, would be an encroachment upon the liberty of the men. . . .

“The necessity which the European women have to acquire experience in the affairs of the world, and in learning various arts, on account of the duty that belongs to them to take part in their husband’s business,” which experience could not be obtained by keeping in concealment; whereas the duties of the Asiatic women consisting only in having the custody of the husband’s property, and bringing up the children, they have no occasion for such experience, or for laying aside their own custom of concealment. . . .

“The privilege of the husband, by law, to marry several wives.” This, to the European women, seems a grievous oppression; and they hold those very cheap who submit to it. But, in truth, the cause of this law and custom is the nature of the female sex themselves, which separates them from the husband, the several last months of pregnancy, and time of suckling; and besides these, the Asiatic women have many other times for being separate from their husbands. This privilege [of having several wives] not being allowed by the English law, is indeed a great hardship upon the English husbands: whereas the Asiatic law, permitting polygamy, does the husband justice, and wrongs not the wife.

“The power of divorce being in the hands of the husband.” . . . Divorce at the will of the husband, lies in the very justice of the law, and the distinction of the male sex over the female, on account of the greater share they take in the management of the world; for all the laborious work falls to their lot, such as carrying heavy burthens, going to war, repulsing enemies, etc. and the women generally spend their lives in repose and quiet. . . .

“The Asiatic daughters not having the liberty of choosing their husbands.” On this head nothing need be said, for in Europe this liberty is merely nominal, as, without the will of the father and mother, the daughter’s choice is of no avail; and whatever choice they make for her, she must submit to; and in its effects, it serves only to encourage running away (as the male and female slaves in India do), and to breed coldness and trouble amongst the members of a family. . . .

Besides these . . . as above noticed, of the superior advantages the Asiatic women enjoy over the European, there are many others, here omitted for brevity’s sake. What has been said is enough for people of discernment. Farewell.

[From Abu Taleb, *Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan in Asia, Africa, and Europe during the years 1799 to 1803*, trans. from Persian by C. Stewart (1814; New Delhi: Sona, 1972), app. D, 342–347, 351.]

ON THE MARGINS OF POWER

Most of the selections given above refer to those possessing political or economic power, but a third arena of social change in the eighteenth century can be seen in the activities of peasants and tribal peoples on the margins of power.

Such groups, in contrast to the others, left few written records of their own, but in the official British records they appear very frequently as opposing the advance of British power and rebelling against indigenous centers of authority. There were peasant uprisings all over India in the eighteenth century, occasioned not by ideology but by groups who were rebelling against the tax collectors, merchants, and moneylenders who seized their lands for debts.

THE SANNYĀSĪ UPRISING

One uprising against the British just as they were establishing their power in Bengal was led, according to British officials at the time, by *sannyāsīs*, or Hindu ascetics, in 1783. The records often speak of them along with fakirs, or Muslim religious mendicants. The records also refer frequently to “naked Nagas,” holy men who “in an excess of zeal carry their secession from ordinary manners so far as to leave off every kind of clothing.” Either by choice or by force of circumstances, they roamed in groups, heavily armed, often attacking landlords, merchants, and bankers. As the East India Company was establishing its power, these fierce bands challenged their authority, robbing the rich to give, they claimed, to the poor. The peasants apparently welcomed them, for the Company officials complained that *sannyāsīs* were given shelter.

The selections here are from the official records of the East India Company. In Bankim Chandra Chatterji’s famous novel, *Ānandamath*, quoted in chapter 5, these *sannyāsīs* become the symbols of militant nationalism and hostility toward the foreign oppressor.

[*A Minute of 1773 from the East India Company’s governor, Warren Hastings, to the East India Company in London:*] “The Governor [Hastings] cannot learn that they have any fixed abode, but that they chiefly frequent the countries lying at the foot of the chain of mountains which separate Hindustan from Tibbet, wandering continually from the Gogra river in the Domain of the Vizier [Awadh] to the Burramputter [Brahmaputra] and from this line occasionally penetrating into [Gorakhpur?], Butsea [Bettiah], Tirroot [Tirhut], Purnea, and Rungpur, he finds that except one sect among them called Hunjooghees who never mix with the hordes which infest their more civilized neighbours, they neither marry nor have families, but recruit their members by the stoutest of the children which they steal from the countries through which they pass, that some among them carry on trade in Diamonds, Coral and other articles of great price and small compass and often travel with great wealth—some subsist by gratuitous alms and the others the far greater by plunder; that the various sects of them travel at fixed periods on religious pilgrimages to the Burrumpooter, Byjenath [Baidyanath] and Ganga Saugore [Sagar], besides those who in all dry months of the year pass through the provinces on their way to Juggernath [Puri]; that individuals of

them are at all times scattered about the villages and capital towns of the provinces and where the bigotry of the inhabitants afford them an access to their homes and every right of hospitality, which they are suspected of abusing in the most treacherous manner by reuniting with the [main body] whenever they enter the country and giving information of the most substantial inhabitants and of the places where their wealth is deposited; that they are continually seen on the roads armed with swords, lances, matchlocks and generally loaded with heavy bundles.”

[In 1774 *Hastings wrote of the difficulty of collecting taxes*:] “A very considerable part of the deficiency may be attributed to the plunder, extortion and depredations occasioned by the continued incursions of the Sannyasis. It is not to be doubted that these have been productive of heavy loss to the country although we adopted it as an invariable maxim to grant no deduction to the Farmers on this account in order if possible to conquer their blind superstition in giving countenance to these religious plunderers and make it their interest to repel their incursions.”

[Quoted in J. M. Ghosh, *Sannyasi and Fakir Raiders in Bengal*
(Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat, 1930), 18, 19.]

HIMMAT BAHADUR, THE PEOPLE’S HERO

Bundelkhand is a remote, hilly area in Central India, where local chieftains were never fully subdued by the Mughals. Himmat Bahadur, referred to in some accounts as a “slave boy,” was the leader of an armed band that served a number of chieftains. A poem by a bard at his “court” celebrates him as a Robin Hood figure, compassionate to the poor but merciless to his enemies, the rich, and powerful.

Himmat Bahadur is a great king, incomparable in his excellent
benevolence.

He is generous, brave, and compassionate, [but] to his amassed
enemies he is death itself. . . .

He darkens and disgraces his assembled enemies, he burns them
in their wild hide-outs.

During sacrifices he is compassionate to the poor, [to whom] he
is long-armed [generous].

He gives endowments to support dharma, he is the clothing that
covers Hindu shame.

He embodies radiant splendor, he is an insatiable demon when his
emotions are sparked. . . .

He is a remarkable horseman and an unsurpassed archer.

He chants Siva bhajans [songs] with such excellence and equanimity—
no one can compare.

Himmat Bahadur is a powerful king, his army's presence immediately
destroys his foe.

His occupation is world conquest; he is notorious in the lands of
his enemies.

[From William R. Pinch, "Subaltern Sadhus?

Political Ascetics in Indian Myth, Memory, and History," 8–9,

<http://www.virginia.edu/soasia/symsem/kisan/papers/sadhull.html>.]

RELIGIOUS EXPRESSIONS, DEVOTIONAL AND INTELLECTUAL

A fourth very important aspect of the social life of the century, and one for which there is much material, consists of the religious movements in Indian society in all regions of the country. Sikhism, noted above, was one such that became a political movement as well. Foreign visitors to India in the eighteenth century almost always commented upon the fervor and frequency of the public performances of rituals and temple ceremonies, as well as individual religious devotion, at a multitude of sacred places. While undoubtedly religious observances, public or private, continued in the same patterns as they always had, there are nonetheless signs of an increase during this period in the appeal of fervent personal devotion to the divine. This has sometimes been interpreted as a search for escape in troubled times, a refuge of the poor, or a vehicle of protest against the restrictions of caste and gender, and while all of these may have been contributing factors, at the same time the universal sense of need for devotional faith and practice must be recognized. Devotional religion, as in all times and places, has appealed to all sorts and conditions of men and women. It should be noted that these religious movements had continuous interaction with the political reorganization of the "Hindu" and "Muslim" rulers and with the merchants and traders as well as with the peasant groups. The selections given here demonstrate the variety and vitality of religion in the context of a century of experiment and change that drew constantly on the past.

In most Indian languages, the devotional songs of poet-saints have been preserved, and there seems to have been an efflorescence of vibrant religious poetry. Poet-saints won large followings, and the writing of their biographies in many of the languages of India became common. These movements were rooted in the past, but reflect an awareness of a changing society, and many of them in a spirit of reform criticized image worship or claimed to transcend the boundaries of religious orthodoxy. These religious poets, who wrote not in Sanskrit but in the local languages, provided a base for the great development of prose literature in those languages that is associated with nineteenth-century nationalism.

*RAMPRASAD SEN: SINGING TO THE
GODDESS IN BENGAL*

A convincing connection has been made between the great efflorescence of worship of the goddess Kālī in eighteenth-century Bengal and the increasing power of the zamindars, or landlords. They were attracted, it has been suggested, “to a deity whose prowess and majesty mirrored what they themselves were attempting to obtain, as they jockeyed for power and prestige in a difficult political climate.”⁵ Shakti, the feminine principle of power, has traditionally been associated with royal power, and so has the worship of the goddesses Kālī and Durgā. In Bengal, many poet-saints, including Ramprasad Sen (1718–1785), sang in praise of the great Goddess. Many of the poems have familiar metaphors from daily life for the difficulties in finding salvation: dishonest courts, failed crops, and the challenges of loving a volatile Mother.

POEM 54

I have learned:
Kālī’s court is extremely unfair.
Someone’s always shouting
“Accuser! Complainant!”
but nobody ever shows up.
How to explain a court
where the bench clerk
is the top man?
The financial steward is deranged;
can you trust what he says?
I have brought in one lakh lawyers;
Mother, what more can I do?
I call you “Tārā,”
but I see my Mother has no ears.
I rebuke you:
You’ve gone deaf and become black.
Rāmprasād says,
She has disgraced my life.

POEM 70

Oh Mind, you don’t know how to farm;
your human field has fallen fallow.
Cultivate it, and the crops you’ll grow
will gleam like gold. Fence it round with Kālī’s name
so your harvest won’t be harmed.

The Wild-Haired One is strong;
 Death won't come near that fence.
 Don't you know? Your crops will never fail—
 not in a day, a year, or a century.
 So apply yourself, Mind;
 work to reap your harvest.
 The teacher sowed the mantra;
 now water his seed with devotion's showers.
 And oh, if you can't do it alone, Mind,
 take Rāmprasād along.

POEM 122

This time, Kālī,
 I'm going to eat You up.
 I'll eat You,
 I'll eat You,
 Oh Compassionate to the Poor.
 I was born under an evil star
 and sons born then
 devour their mothers.
 Either You eat me
 or I eat You:
 we must decide on one.
 I'll make a curry of Your demons and witches
 and boil into a soup
 with spices and ghee
 the heads from Your necklace.
 Your blackness I'll smear all over
 my hands, my face, and my limbs.
 When Death comes
 I'll blacken his face too.
 I say I'll eat You up
 but You won't fill my stomach;
 I'll sit You on my heart-lotus
 and worship You mentally.
 They may tell me
 if I eat Kālī
 I'll get into trouble with Death,
 but why should I fear him?
 I'll shout "Kālī!"
 and stick my thumb in his face.
 I'll make sure he understands

Śrī Rāmprasād is Kālī's son.
I'll cause my death myself
through mantra repetition.

[Rachel Fell McDermott, *Singing to the Goddess: Poems to Kālī and Umā from Bengal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).]

The reference above in Ramprasād's poem 54 to the court reminds us that in the eighteenth century much Indian poetry was produced under the patronage of local or imperial courts. Indeed, as Allison Busch has shown, languages such as Brajbhasha were sufficiently popular to be used not only as a vehicle for bhakti but also, alongside Persian, for aesthetic, panegyric, courtly literature. This was true in the Mughal courtly contexts of North India, from the time of Akbar all the way into the era of Aurangzeb's sons in the late seventeenth century, and into the early eighteenth century.⁶

THE POETRY OF NAGARIDAS: KRISHNA DEVOTION IN VRINDAVAN

Savant Singh (1699–1764), who used the poetic name of Nagaridas, was born into the Vaishnavite Rajasthani dynasty of Kishangarh, which was under Mughal control. The famous miniature paintings of Krishna and Rādhā produced in the Kishangarh atelier between 1737 and 1757 immortalize Nagaridas and his queen or concubine Bani Thani, since it is their faces that provide the models for the divine lovers. After “the poet-king” was forced from the throne in 1757, he went to live in Vrindavan, which by the eighteenth century had become the preeminent center of Krishna worship; many poets composed songs in Krishna's honor in Brajbhasha, the language of the region. By the time of his death seven years later, Nagaridas had produced two volumes of poetry and prose, mainly on the theme of Krishna and Rādhā.

Excerpted below are stanzas 17–25 from his “Arill-pacīsī” (25 verses in Arill meter), which praises Krishna's love for the women of Braj.

17
Gopāl obstructs the road on the pretext of a toll, bearing a staff;
In deep forest and on dark common he has taken a woman.
Entangle your mind in those entanglements of eyes, words and bodies;
Sing night and day of Nanda's son, the skilful one of Braj.

18
He plunders butter and women's hearts, which they kept hidden;
He stealthily steals their clothes while they worship the goddess.
Look on this thief, and have your mind stolen by him:
Sing night and day of Nanda's son, the skilful one of Braj.

19

Hearing his flute, the women of Braj have fallen into passion's grip;
 inanimate and animate change roles, celestial women are compelled.
 Remembering that intoxicating tune, let the intoxicant infuse
 your mind:
 sing night and day of Nanda's son, the skilful one of Braj.

20

On an autumn night he unfolded the *rāsa* dance and created joy;
 Śiva lost his concentration and his mind began to roam.
 Remembering the frenzy of that blissful sentiment, delight your mind:
 sing night and day of Nanda's son, the skilful one of Braj.

21

Holding each other's arms they move in sweet steps;
 their jeweled crescent-shaped necklaces and their earrings tremble.
 The wonder of the gods at this sport—how could it be forgotten?
 Sing night and day of Nanda's son, the skilful one of Braj.

22

The splendour of that Ocean of Qualities increased greatly
 with the musical airs,
 with sweet cries of "*thei! thei!*" as a wanton eyebrow arched.
 Drench your soul in the spirit of that sport, the defeat of Kāmdev:
 sing night and day of Nanda's son, the skilful one of Braj.

23

Drowning in perspiration from the dance, he plunges then into
 the Yamuna,
 Playing like an elephant with his whole retinue of females,
 Remembering the splendour of that splashing and sprinkling,
 be charmed:
 sing night and day of Nanda's son, the skilful one of Braj.

24

For Rādhā's sake, the dark one leaves Braj not for a moment;
 the skilful one performs that eternal sport which pleases the mind.
 Taste with your tongue the blended glory of Braj and Rādhā:
 sing night and day of Nanda's son, the skilful one of Braj.

25

Hearing of the joyous sport of Braj never cloys;
 steep your soul in the holy company of the Braj devotees.

May “Nāgariyā” attain residence in Braj as the fruit of grace;
sing night and day of Nanda’s son, the skilful one of Braj.

[Rupert Snell, *The Hindi Classical Tradition: A Braj Bhāṣā Reader*
(New Delhi: Heritage Publishers, 1992), 181–182.]

Although many poets would claim Vrindavan as the deserved center of Krishna devotion in eighteenth century India, the popularity of the Krishna theme was geographically wide, as we will see.

TYAGARAJA: TELUGU COMPOSER AND POET

Tyagaraja (1767–1847) is regarded as one of the greatest composers of devotional songs in Telegu, one of the main languages of South India; his songs are still widely popular and often performed. Tyagaraja worshiped Rāma, the hero of Valmiki’s great Sanskrit epic, *Rāmāyana*, familiar throughout India and Southeast Asia in many languages. His songs express devotional fervor and ethical teachings. As one of his lyrics puts it, “Through philosophical knowledge one attains salvation only gradually after several births; but one who has knowledge of melodies along with natural devotion to God becomes a liberated soul here and now.”

He wrote a long poem about Krishna (“Lord Hari”) taking the *gopīs*, the beautiful young cowherd girls of Vrindavan, out in a boat on a river. A fierce rainstorm threatens to sink the boat, but they are saved by his asking them to take off their clothes so that he can use them to keep out the water. The excerpt below attempts to preserve this amusing story line.

(For the listeners)
Those who listen to this story
Of the boat, written about Lord Hari,
Following the right path on this earth
They will prosper, having a long life
Having the best of children and wealth.

(Excerpts from the poem)
Once upon a time the beloved consort
Of Lakṣmī, he who is merciful to the world,
As Kṛṣṇa, son of Nanda, after
Delighting in the Cowherd maidens . . . decided
To have some fun in the water
In a boat with the cowherd girls. . . .
Each one thinking Kṛṣṇa’s love was hers alone.
[Krishna assumes different forms for each of them. But then the wind
and rain start, threatening their lives, and they cry:]
“Now we are at a point where the rain . . .

Won't let us stay in our place
And there are these thunderings, which in no way abate! . . .

The boat has sprung this leak—
Now who'll be our protector?
We can't see our hands in front of our faces!
Soon this river will be our final resting place! . . .
We went the way our desire led us!" . . .

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord, seeing the frightened fair women,
The beautiful *gōpikās* babbling deliriously in this way,
Speaking of the means of survival—what does he say?

"You should not be crying, O ladies . . .
Fate cannot be overruled! O deer-eyed ladies
Will you remove and use your five-colored blouses
To stem the water which is rising and rushing in?" . . .

"This is a scriptural decree!"
So those ladies thought, and they all agreed.
They took off their skirts, with ever so much modesty
And they packed them in the place that leaked,
Thinking "This is a scriptural decree!" . . .

Worrying "What if anyone sees us!" quickly they
Hid their milk-domes with their hands.
Wondering whether to cover their shame
Or to try and save their lives. . . .
Having heard with devotion, the word of the Supreme Being
Closing their eyes, they prayed . . .
After the shining of effulgence, then
The thick darkness of rain subsided, and
The boat went back to the way it had been before;
And all the women, seeing again their beautiful blouses
And clothing embroidered with gold, were swelling with joy. . . .

Then, those *gōpikā* gems, seeing Kṛṣṇa
The Supreme Being, lotus-eyed, whose form
Is attractive as ten million love-gods—
Do you wonder what they are doing? . . .
"All glory and great auspicious praise to you!
O Kṛṣṇa you are firmly fixed in our minds!
O glory and great auspicious praise to you,

Thief of Lakṣmī's heart, protector of
Tyāgarāja, glory to you who have given all good
To our clan in this world and the next, all glory!"

Whoever in this world of humankind listens
To this holy story composed by Tyāgarāja,
This story which steals the hearts of good people,
Indeed those persons will be favored by Kṛṣṇa.

Thus the boat story composed by Tyāgarājasvāmī is concluded.

[*Naukā Caritram*, trans. W. J. Jackson in *Tyāgarāja and the Renewal of Tradition* (Delhi: Motilal, 1994), 6–7, 12, 14, 17, 18, 21.]

DAYARAM OF GUJARAT: UNCHANGING DEVOTION IN A CHANGING WORLD

Dayaram (1777–1852) is one of the best-known bhakti poets of Gujarat. Great changes were taking place in Gujarat in the eighteenth century. Having been one of the important *subās* of the Mughal Empire, with a great trading center at the port of Surat, in 1753 Gujarat came under the control of the Marathas as they extended their power. Then early in the nineteenth century, the British East India Company defeated the Marathas and became the dominant power in Gujarat. Ahmedabad, a political and commercial center under the Mughals, became one of the most industrialized cities of India. Dayaram lived in Dabhoi, which became British territory in 1818, but none of the ferment and change of the time is reflected in his poetry. In his poetry, human love is not a metaphor for divine love but an expression of the reality of all aspects of life. In the nineteenth century, Gujarat was the birthplace of such reform movements as the Arya Samaj and, most striking of all, the combination of religious, social, and political movements identified with Mahatma Gandhi. Such devotion, here addressed to Krishna in the voice of a woman, seemingly so quietistic, was part of Gandhi's heritage and undergirded, as he insisted, his political and social activism.

In this excerpt, "Bihārīlāla" is an epithet for Krishna.

IF YOU STAND STILL I'LL TELL YOU

1

If you stand (still) then I'll tell you something, Bihārīlāla!
For you I have wasted myself, Bihārīlāla!

2

The day on which we met in Vrindāvana,
The impatience of that day is in my body.

3

Where can I speak of the pain of separation,
Where can I speak of the blaze in my heart?

4

I wander like a madwoman in the forest,
There is no relief day or night.

5

I am reckoned as mad in the whole village,
My thoughts don't stay on household chores.

6

How can I say what sorrow is in my mind?
Restlessness has struck my body.

7

At every moment I hear footsteps coming,
My soul is sewn to your body.

8

It's no good to say a word about this restlessness,
I go into the house and then I come in the courtyard.

9

How long can I bear such anxiety?
You are the prince of tricksters so what can I say?

10

You loved me, so now keep your word,
Don't reject me when anxious I have taken refuge in you.

11

You must have thousands like me,
But my soul will depart without you.

12

I don't like even speaking of others,
My eyes have become greedy so where can I go?

13

You are beautiful from head to toe, full of qualities,
Who made you so beautiful?

14

You smile sweetly and look sideways,
You pierce me with the daggers of your eyes.

15

In separation, your flute makes it worse,
Seeing you, how can a woman's judgment remain?

16

Those who are in pain, they know this in pain,
Before it, other sorrows are in the dust.

17

Talkers will talk, but you are the Lord,
Dayā's Beloved, I am your servant.

[Rachel Dwyer, *The Poetics of Devotion: The Gujarati Lyrics of Dayaram* (London: Curzon, 2001), 143, 145.]

MUDDUPALANI: A TELUGU POET ADVISES KRISHNA HOW TO MAKE LOVE

In reading the mystical devotional poetry of all religious traditions, it is sometimes difficult, especially for a nonbeliever, to see the distinction between loving devotion offered to the Divine and expressions of erotic human love.

In a set of remarkable poems written in Telugu by the woman poet Muddupalani (1730–1790), the speaker advises Krishna how he should make love to his favorite, Rādhā [Rādhikā], in a way that will please her. Perhaps on another level the author is advising a human lover how to please a woman, suggesting that all ecstasy, whether human or divine, is the same. As simultaneously the lover and the beloved of Krishna, Rādhikā was the center of a devotional cult for both men and women.

In the second excerpt, Kali is the many-headed snake demon whom Krishna subdued in the waters of the Yamuna; Kamsa is Krishna's wicked uncle, whom he defeated; to protect his devotees from the wrath of Indra Krishna lifted Mount Govardhana as an umbrella-shield; and, at the goading of a wicked animal keeper who wanted to kill Krishna, the elephant Kuvalayāpīda attacked him.

APPEASING RĀDHIKĀ

Move on her lips
the tip of your tongue;
do not scare her
by biting hard.

Place on her cheeks
 a gentle kiss;
 do not scratch her
 with your sharp nails.
 Hold her nipple
 with your fingertips;
 do not scare her
 by squeezing it tight.
 Make love
 gradually;
 do not scare her
 by being aggressive.
 I am a fool
 to tell you all these.
 When you meet her
 and wage your war of love
 would you care to recall
 my “do’s and don’ts,” Honey?

Honey,
 Why do you think
 I stamped on Kali?
 The snake seemed to rival
 your lovely plait.
 Why do you think
 I broke the bow of Kamsa?
 It seemed to rival
 your shapely brows.
 Why do you think
 I uprooted the Govardhan?
 The mountain seemed to rival
 your firm breasts.
 Why do you think
 I hurt Kuvalayāpīda?
 The elephant seemed to rival
 your comely gait.
 Please, therefore,
 ask yourself
 if it is fair for you
 to treat me shabbily.

If I ask her not to kiss me,
 stroking on my cheeks

she presses my lips hard against hers.
If I ask her not to touch me,
stabbing me with her firm breasts
she hugs me.
If I ask her not to get too close
for it is not decorous,
she swears at me loudly.
If I tell her of my vow not
to have a woman in my bed,
she hops on
and begins the game of love.
Appreciative,
she lets me drink from her lips,
fondles me, talks on,
making love again and again.
How could I stay away
from her company?

[Trans. B. V. L. Narayanarow, in *Women Writing in India: 600 b.c. to the Present Day*, ed. Susie Tharu and K. Lalita (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993), vol. 1, 118–120.]

SHAH ABD UL-LATIF: SUFISM IN SINDH

Side by side with the outpouring of religious poetry in the Hindu tradition, the great tradition of Sufi poetry continued in the Islamic community. The religious poetry quoted here is rooted in Islamic mysticism. Mysticism has often been regarded with suspicion by orthodox theologians because it seems at times to give the believer direct access to God, in a religious experience that is often claimed to embody a universality that transcends sectarian boundaries.

The theological and philosophical writings of the Sufis in India were usually in Persian, or, more rarely, in Arabic, but the rich and passionate devotional heritage of Sufism was expressed in the regional languages and was therefore the medium through which Sufism had contact with the masses. Here the parallel with the bhakti literary tradition, noted in volume 1, is very close, for just as it can be argued that the message of the poet-singers of the bhakti tradition touched the hearts of Hindus everywhere, so the poet-singers of the Sufi tradition colored all of Indian Islam. Both bhakti and Sufism contributed greatly to the development of the regional languages of India.

The devotional poetry of the Sufis, sung in the regional languages, undoubtedly attracted non-Muslims, acting as a bridge of sympathy between faiths. Many Sufis were members or affiliates of Sufi orders (of which the most prominent in India are the Chishti, Naqshbandi, Qadiri, and Suhrawardi, introduced in the twelfth century during the time of the Delhi Sultanate), and were aware of the hidden meanings of

their mystical experience in terms of Islamic truth. The following selections offer brief samplings of the immense amount of Sufi poetry in the regional languages of India. They are often heavily influenced in vocabulary, imagery, prosody, and genre by Persian and Indo-Persian models, although local legends of Krishna are also incorporated.

Shah Abd ul-Latif (1689–1752), born in Hyderabad, Sindh, joined a group of wandering yogis and later settled in Bhit, where his tomb is still a revered shrine. His verses in Sindhi, composed according to Indic rules of prosody and sung to Indian melodies, remain immensely popular today. His mystical poetry, like that of Bullhe Shah, his contemporary, is a passionate assertion of an all-encompassing spirituality beyond dualisms: God is the Beloved, God is the Enemy.

REALITY IS ONE

From unity came multiplicity, multiplicity is all union;
Reality is one: do not be mistaken!

He is “Mighty in His Greatness,” He is all Beauty,
He is the image of the beloved, He is perfection of loveliness,
He Himself becomes master and disciple, He is all imagination,
And through Him the state of all things becomes known.

He is this, and He is that, He is God, and He is death,
He the Beloved, He the breath, He the enemy, and He the helper.

(p. 193)

Those, whose body is a rosary, the soul a bead of the rosary,
the heart a tanboursa—

They play on the strings of the secret of unity:

“He is One, has no companion”—thus they sing—

For those sleep is fitting, slumber is worship for them.

(p. 194)

The Sufi is “without religious form”; nobody has understood him;
He struggles deep in his interior, his foot has no trace,
For him who has enmity with him, he has become a helper.

(p. 201)

The Sufi has cleaned and washed off the pages of existence,
Then he has been granted during his life the vision of the friend.

(p. 203)

If you put a cap on your neck, then become a real Sufi:
Reaching the goblet of poison, drink the full glass;
The place (of honor) will be of those who have reached
the (mystical) state.

(p. 204)

[Shāh Abd ul-Latif, trans. Annamarie Schimmel, *Pain and Grace: A Study of Two Mystical Writers of Eighteenth-Century India* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), *page numbers after selections.*]

In this next poem, Abd ul-Latif uses images drawn from the Hindu ascetic practices of yoga, the search for ultimate liberation through rigorous practices of concentration and meditation. There are similar practices in Islam, but the poet sees the yogis as searchers who find the Lord in Nothingness.

YOGIS SEE THE LORD IN NOTHINGNESS

The yogis pack their bags with hunger, and prepare themselves for
oblivion or bliss.
They do not desire food but greedily pour thirst in their cups and sip it.
They flog their minds until they are like beaten flax,
Thus they wade through the wasteland and at last are near liberation.
Take advantage of their presence, be with them and enrich your experience.
Soon they will go on a journey to the distant land of which they think,
Leaving this world of pleasure and reaching the holy Ganges,
They wear only a loin-cloth and need no sacred baths.
They hear the subtle call that sounded before the advent of Islam.
They sever all ties and meet their guide, Goraknāth [Shiva].
The yogis become again the Whole, their only concern;
Whose seat is Nothingness, I cannot live without them,
Where there is no heaven and no trace of the earth,
Where the moon and the sun neither rise nor set.
Thus far have the yogis set their tryst with Supreme Knowledge,
And they see the Lord in Nothingness.

[From Motilal Wadhwal Jotwani, *Shāh Abdu'l Latīf, His Life and Work: A Study of Sociocultural and Literary Situations in Eighteenth Century Sindh* (Delhi: University of Delhi, 1975), 139–141, revised.]

BULLHE SHAH: NEITHER HINDU NOR MUSLIM

Bullhe Shah (1680–1752) is one of the most admired Punjabi Sufi poets. He also wrote treatises in Persian prose and was drawn to the philosophy of Vedānta.

“Hindu” and “Mussalman” here refer mainly to external differences of practice. Shah Mansur was the heretical mystic Al-Hallaj, martyred in Baghdad in 922.

ABANDON THE PRIDE OF RELIGION

Neither Hindu nor Mussalman, let us sit and spin, abandoning the
pride of religion.

Neither Sunni nor Shī'a, I have taken the path of peace and unity.
Neither hungry nor full, neither naked nor clothed
Neither weeping nor laughing, neither exiled nor settled
Neither a sinner nor pure, I do not walk in the way of sin or virtue.
Bullhe! In all hearts I feel the Lord,
So I have abandoned both Hindu and Muslim.

LOVE AND LAW

Love and Law are struggling:
I will settle the doubts of your heart, holy Sir,
The questions of Law and the answers of Love.

Law says: go to the *mullā* and learn the rules and regulations;
Love says: one letter is enough, close your books and put them away.

Law says: perform the five baths and worship alone in the temple;
Love says: what's this veil for? Let the vision be open.

Law says: go inside the mosque and perform the duty of prayer;
Love says: go to the tavern, read the prayers, drinking wine.

Law says: let us go to heaven, we will eat the fruits of heaven;
Love says: we are the keepers and will ourselves distribute the fruits.

Law says: faithful one, perform the *hajj*, cross the bridge;
Love says, the *kāāba* is the door of the Beloved, from there I will not stir.

Law says: we put Shāh Mansūr on the stake;
Love says: through you he entered the Beloved's door.

The place of Love is the highest heaven, the crown of creation;
Out of love He has created Bullhā, humble, and from dust.

[Adapted from L. R. Krishna, *Panjābī Sufi Poets, a.d. 1460–1900*
(Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1938), 85–86.]

WARIS SHAH: MYSTICS AND LOVERS

Waris Shah (1730–1790), who wrote in Punjabi, uses, as mystics do in most religious traditions, the language and metaphors of earthly love. To Waris Shah, the Divine Beloved is male; the soul longing for union is female.

I AM TIRED OF READING VEDAS AND QUR'ĀNS

Ever new, ever fresh is the Spring of Love!
Ever new, ever fresh is the Spring of Love!

When I learnt the lesson of love,
My heart dreaded the sight of the mosque.
I went into the idol temple,
Where a thousand horns were blowing.

When I grasped the hint of love,
I beat and drove out all senses of “I” and “You,”
Both my heart and vision became clear.
Now in whatsoever direction I look, I see only the Lord.

I am tired of reading Vedas and Qur'āns;
My forehead is worn by constant prostrations in the mosque.
But the lord is neither at Hindu shrines nor at Mecca,
Whoever found him, found him in the light of his own beauty.

Burn the prayer mat, break the bucket,
And do not touch the beads or the staff.
The lovers are proclaiming at the top of their voices,
“Give up the lawful and eat carrion.”

I have lived all my life in a mosque,
But my heart is still full of dirt.
I had never vowed for the prayer of unity of God
Now why do I rave and cry?

Love has made me forget to prostrate myself before you,
Now why do you quarrel with me in vain?
Wāris is doing his best to keep silent about it,
But love says “Kill—destroy all show and formality.”

[Adapted from R. K. Kuldip, *Wāris Shāh*
(Calcutta: A. C. Dey, 1971), 60–61.]

KHWAJA MIR DARD: PAIN AND POETRY

Dard (1720–1785) was the son of a teacher in the Naqshbandi order of Sufis in Delhi; he too was recognized as a spiritual leader of both the Naqshbandi and Chishti orders. Although he wrote both poetry and learned prose in Persian, he is best remembered as one of the great “pillars” of Urdu poetry.

Here he expresses a familiar theme in Urdu mystical poetry: the pain that comes from loving the Divine, as well as the pain of earthly love.

YOU’VE NEVER LOOKED MY WAY

If someone has not seen you here on earth,
It makes no difference if he sees the world or not.

Compressed so tight with sorrow is my rosebud-heart
That no one yet has ever seen it open.

Ah, you strange one, you solitary mystery,
Never have I seen another such as you.

What pain and misery, what trials and disgrace!
Within your love, there’s nothing that I haven’t seen.

My scars have made me like a tree of lights,
And yet you never came to see the show.

Your negligence has brought me to this pass,
But you’ve never looked, never looked my way.

The veil across the Beloved’s face was nothing but myself:
When my eyes opened, I did not see the veil.

Oh Dard! Night and day, I am at his door,
Whom no one here has ever seen or understood.

[From *Divān-e-Dard*, ed. Z. A. Siddiqi (New Delhi: Maktabah Jami’ah, 1963), 82–83, trans. M. Mazici.]

*SHAH WALI ALLAH AND THE RECONCILIATION
OF DIFFERENCE*

The vibrancy of Muslim thought in eighteenth-century India was not confined to mystical poetry, although that genre certainly provided one way in which the inter-

connectedness of the religious traditions of the century could be articulated. The legal formulations of Shah Wali Allah comprise another original, and highly intellectual, contribution. As noted earlier in this chapter, Shah Wali Allah understood his mission to be the integration of the increasingly fragmented and variegated forms of Islamic intellectual learning in the India of his day. Fundamental to all his endeavors was his approach to *ijtihād*, or legal interpretation, in the context of Islamic life. *Ijtihād* is the process whereby scholars of the Sharia arrive at determinations of the Holy Law in circumstances not already covered by previous decisions. His method of *ijtihād* was to circumvent juridical differences of opinion by explaining the historical development of the dispute, finding truth on all sides, and then presenting the reader with a set of equally valid options. This conciliatory method was not restricted to theoretical discussion, but extended to his own legal practice. A committed follower of the Hanafi school of jurisprudence, he also saw much benefit in the Maliki and Shafii schools.⁷ Even more broadly, Shah Wali Allah struggled to find a place in his intellectual system for religious traditions other than Islam.

These three aspects of his intellectual project (his approaches to *ijtihād*, legal schools, and other religions) are illustrated in the three excerpts below. The last two of them are taken from his master work, *Hujjat Allāh al-Bāligha* (The Conclusive Argument from God), written in the 1730s, which focuses on the rich tradition of hadith interpretation.

A GENERAL APPROACH TO LEGAL INTERPRETATION

The true nature of legal interpretation (*ijtihād*), as understood from the discourse of scholars, is exhaustive endeavor in understanding the derivative principles of the Holy Sharīʿa Law by means of detailed arguments, their genera being based on four departments: 1) The Holy Book [the Qurʿān]; 2) The example and precept of the Prophet [the Sunna]; 3) The consensus of opinion of the Muslim community; 4) The application of analogy.

Let it be understood from this that legal interpretation is wider than [i.e., not confined to] the exhaustive endeavor to perceive the principle worked out by earlier scholars, no matter whether such an endeavor leads to disagreement or agreement with these earlier scholars. . . .

Now whoever recognizes the true nature of this problem will realize: 1) that in the majority of cases of legal interpretation the truth lies somewhere between the two extremes of difference; 2) that in the matter of religion there is breadth and not narrowness; 3) that being unreasonably stubborn and determined to deny what the opponent says is ridiculous; 4) that the construing of definitions if it aims at bringing concepts closer to the understanding of every literate person, assists knowledge. But if these definitions are far-fetched and try to discriminate between involved matters by means of innovated premises, it will soon lead to an unworthy and innovated system of Sharīʿa; 5) the true opinion is that pronounced by Izz al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Salām who says: “He attains the goal

who stands firm on what is agreed upon by scholars and abstains from what they have unanimously disallowed, and regards allowable that which is unanimously thus regarded by scholars, and does that which is unanimously approved by scholars, and keeps away from that which they have unanimously regarded as hateful.”

[From Shāh Walī-Ullāh, “‘Iqd al-Jīd fī Ahkām al-Ijtihād Wa’l Taqlīd,”
trans. M. Da‘ūd Rahbar, in *The Muslim World* 45.4 (1955): 357–358.]

THE CAUSES FOR DISAGREEMENT AMONG THE SCHOOLS OF THE JURISTS

Know that God, may He be exalted, brought into being a generation of scholars after the era of the Successors who conveyed knowledge in fulfillment of the promise of the Prophet, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, when he said, “A just person of every succeeding generation will convey this knowledge.” Thus these persons learned from those who had been with the Prophet the manner of performing the lesser and greater ablutions, prayer, pilgrimage, marriage, business transactions, and all other commonly occurring things. They transmitted the hadith reports of the prophet, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, heard the judgments of the *Qadīs* of the various cities and the *fatwas* of their *mufītīs* and they inquired about legal issues, and carried out *ijtihād* concerning all those things. . . .

The essence of the procedure of these scholars was to hold to both the hadith which went back uninterruptedly to the Prophet (*musnad*) and those related about him but not directly on a Companion’s authority (*mursal*). They deduced knowledge using the sayings of the Companions and Successors which might be hadiths transmitted from the Messenger of God, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, which they considered to be less authoritative, so they termed them (these hadith) interrupted (*mauqūf*) before reaching the Prophet. . . . In all of these things their procedure was better, and they were more accurate, closer in time, and knew more religious sources by heart, than those who came after them.

For this reason implementing their rulings was prescribed unless they disagreed or a hadith or the Prophet of God, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, manifestly conflicted with their opinion. It was also their method in cases when the hadith reports of the Prophet of God, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, were at variance with one another about some issue, to refer to the opinions of the Companions. . . . When the opinions of the Companions and Successors differed about an issue, then the preference of every scholar was for the opinion of the people of his city and his teachers since he was more able to distinguish their sound opinions from their faulty ones, was more cognizant of the principles connected to these opinions, and would be predisposed toward their superiority and erudition.

The way of ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, . . . and their associates . . . was more worthy of being followed than others, according to the people of Medina, due to what the Prophet, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, had explained about the virtues of Medina, and due to its being the abode of the jurists and the gathering place of the scholars in every age. . . . If the scholars did not find among the sources that they had memorized a response to an issue[,] they derived it on the basis of their (the Companions’) sayings and sought out allusions and logical implications (within these sayings). [. . .]

Abū Hanīfa, may God be pleased with him, was the closest of them to the way of Ibrahīm (al-Nakha‘ī) and his contemporaries and very rarely departed from his teachings. He was extremely talented in making legal derivations based on Ibrahīm’s school and was a precise inquirer into the meanings of the derivations, and he gave the fullest attention to positive law (*al-furū‘*). If you wish to verify the truth of what we have said then go over the statements of Ibrahīm and his contemporaries in the book *al-Āthar* of Muhammad (Abū Yūsuf, 798), may God have mercy on him, and the *Jāmi‘* of ‘Abd al-Razzāq (827), and the *Musan-naf* of Abū Bakr ibn Abū Shayba; then compare these with his school and you will find that he doesn’t diverge from this procedure except on insignificant occasions and that even on these minor occasions he did not go beyond what the jurists of Kufa held. . . .

The followers of Abū Hanīfa, may God be pleased with him, devoted themselves to these compilations by abridging them, explicating them, commenting on them, making derivations, establishing fundamental principles, and making deductions. Later they dispersed to Khurasan and Transoxiana and this became known as the school of Abū Hanīfa.

[From Marcia K. Hermansen, trans., *The Conclusive Argument from God: Shāh Walī Allāh of Delhi’s Hujjat Allāh al-Bāligha* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 427–432.]

THE NEED FOR A RELIGION WHICH ABROGATES THE OTHER RELIGIONS

Study thoroughly the religions present on the face of the earth. Do you see any inconsistency in what we have told you in the preceding chapters? Certainly not, by God! Rather, all of the religions believe in the truthfulness of the founder of the religion and respect him, and hold that he is perfect and has no equal, due to what they beheld in him concerning the establishment of acts of worship, the appearance of miracles, the answering of prayers, the establishment of the penalties, the divine laws, and the restraints without which the religion would not be orderly. Then, following this, there are things among those which we have already mentioned or similar ones, which facilitate obedience. Every group has a practice and a divine law in which they follow the custom of their ancestors, and among these the behavior of the bearers of the religion and

its leaders is preferred. . . . When every nation became distinguished by a religion, and turned to their own practices and ways, they defended themselves by their tongues from what was different than these, and fought for them with their swords. Injustice occurred among them, either due to the rise of someone who was not worthy of holding the religion to these rules, or due to the mixture of the divine laws with heretical innovations so that these become interpolated into them, or due to the difference of the transmitters of the religion, whereby they neglected much of what was necessary, and nothing remained except a trace. . . . Every religion reproached its sister religion, repudiated it, and fought against it, and the truth was obscured. Therefore circumstances required a leader-guide who would deal with the religions as a rightly guided caliph deals with the oppressive kings. . . .

Most of the time, the submission of the rest of the people only occurs after preparations and periods of time to which the lifetime of the prophet does not extend, as had occurred in the case of the presently existing divine laws. The Jews, Christians and Muslims in their beginnings did not believe except for a small group, then later they became victorious. Thus there is nothing better and easier than that he should take into account in the divine laws, the penalties, and the supports of civilization—the customs of the people to whom he has been sent, and that he should not put every restriction on the others who will come later, by making them keep all of these. Taking up this divine law was easy for the first ones due to the testimony of their hearts, and their customs, and it was easy for the later ones due to attraction to the behavior of the leaders of the religion and the caliphs, thus it is like the natural thing for every people in every age, ancient and modern.

The sound regions which produce moderate temperaments were gathered under two great kings at the time (of the Prophet). One of them was Khusrau, and he used to rule over Iraq, Yemen, Khurasan, and the territory adjacent to them. He was the king of Transoxiana, and India was under his command, and annual taxes were collected from them for him. The second was Caesar, and he used to rule Syria, Byzantium and the territory adjacent to them, and the kings of Egypt and the Maghreb and North Africa were under his rule and taxes were collected from them on his behalf.

Destroying the empire of these two kings and taking over their domain was like conquering all of the earth. . . . As for those regions which are far from having a balanced temperament, they were not considered in the universal beneficial purpose, and therefore the Prophet said, “Leave the Turks as long as they leave you (alone),” and, “Don’t bother the Abyssinians as long as they don’t bother you.”

In summary, when God, may He be exalted, wanted to straighten the religion which was crooked and to bring out for humanity a community to command them with the good, to forbid them from evil, and to change their corrupt actions: this depended on the cessation of the power of these two, and this was

facilitated by opposition to their condition since this was of life was in force, or almost so, in all of the healthy regions. Therefore God decreed the end of their power. [. . .]

Among the principles on which the Imām must act is that his teaching them religion should include the establishment of the universal caliphate, . . . he must make his religion predominate over all other religions, . . . he should restrict people so that they do not publicly practice the rituals of those other religions, . . . , and he must confirm by proofs which are demonstrative or rhetorical, and which benefit the mind of the common person, that these other religions must not be followed, because they are not transmitted from an infallible one, or because they are not consistent with the laws of the religion, or because there is distortion and displacement in them. He must prove this in public and explain the justifications of the true religion in that it is easy and tolerant, that its limits are clear so that reason recognizes their value, and that it is as clear as day, that its practices will be more beneficial for the common people, and that it is most similar to what remains among them from the behavior of the preceding prophets, may peace be upon them, and other things like this, and God knows better.

[From *The Conclusive Argument from God*, 340–345.]

“REVOLUTION IN BENGAL”: THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

The fifth defining aspect of the century was the seizure of political control of Bengal and other areas of the subcontinent by the East India Company. While ultimately of great importance for India, this intrusion figures little in the large corpus of Indian literature produced during the century, even in Bengal, where the foreigners were especially active. In view of the focus of the present work, only brief examples of European reactions to what was happening in India in the eighteenth century are given, by writers who were involved in the East India Company's takeover in Bengal.

One of the most vivid accounts is by Henry Vansittart (1732–1760), a young man rather grandly described as “the Governor of Bengal” (1760–1764)—in actuality, the manager of the Company's trading operations in the Calcutta region, which were in a bad financial shape. Before his arrival, the East India Company's army in 1757 at the Battle of Plassey had defeated the army of the nawab of Bengal, nominally the agent of the Mughal Emperor but the actual ruler of Bengal, and had replaced him by rivals who they hoped would be friendly to the Company. Vansittart's accomplishment by force and fraud was to get the current nawab, Mir Qasim, to cede certain prosperous districts to the Company so it could collect the taxes. He was not exaggerating when he reported to the East India Company's directors in London that he had brought about a “revolution in Bengal” by which the tax revenues of Bengal would pay

for their operations in India. In 1765, the Mughal Emperor was forced to give the Company the right to control the taxes, known as the “diwani,” for the whole of the Bengal *subā*, the richest Mughal province. One result was that for a short time the goods the Company bought in Bengal were paid for with local taxes, not with money from England. Another was that the conquest of India, beginning in Bengal, over the next century was also paid for by Indian taxation. Furthermore, many of the soldiers who did the fighting were Indians. The British had made the discovery, which generally served them well right up to 1947, that men from the various regions of India, who sought service in their armies because of the pay and prestige, made excellent soldiers.

The British conquest of India was neither quick nor easy, and it was bitterly opposed by the groups involved in the devolution of the power of the Mughal Empire to the regional powers, especially the Marathas, the Sikhs, the Mysore rulers Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan, and tribal people in some regions. It was these powers, not the enfeebled Mughal Emperor, that sought to prevent the British encroachment through diplomacy and war. Three documents provide perspectives on what was happening.

THE NAWAB OF BENGAL: “I HAVE NO REMEDY”

Mir Qasim, a son-in-law of the previous nawab, had struck a deal with the East India Company by which he became nawab in 1760 in return for a promise to help the Company. He soon discovered that he was powerless, and that the officials of the East India Company and their Indian allies had control of the finances. He pointed out to Vansittart that the Company officials were denouncing him for his failures to maintain law and order at the same time that they were making it impossible for him to do so. His plight is part of a familiar pattern of imperialism, and he must have been aware that the English were planning to overthrow him, which they did in 1764.

[*Letter from Mīr Qāsim, March 26, 1762:*] “Whatever you write is proper; yet from my first accession to the government, I have perceived that many English gentlemen were ill affected to me, and that the country was not in my own hands . . . The cause of the country not being in my own hands is this; that from the factory of Calcutta to Cossimbuzar, Patna and Dacca, all the English chiefs, with their gomastahs [Indian agents], officers and agents, in every district of the government, act as collectors, renters, zamindars and taalookdars [landlords], and setting up the Company’s colors, allow no power to my officers. And besides this, the gomastahs and other servants in every district, in every gunge [market], pergunah [district] and village, carry on a trade in oil, fish, straw, bamboos, rice, paddy, betel-nut, and other things; and every man with a Company’s dustuck [permit] in his hand, regards himself as not less than the Company. In this case I can never have any authority as long as I live . . . From the letters which I have twice received from you, it is evident, that whatever I write, you

regard as a falsehood; and that whatever these gentlemen write, with a view to vilifying me, and rendering me contemptible, that you give credit to. I have no remedy.”

[From H. Vansittart, *A Narrative of the Transactions in Bengal*, 1760–1764, ed. Anil Chandra Banerjee and Bimal Kanti Ghosh (1766; Calcutta: Bagchi, 1976), 148–149.]

*RICHARD BECHER: “THIS FINE COUNTRY IS
VERGING TOWARDS ITS RUIN”*

The second document, an indictment of the result of “the revolution,” is a letter from Richard Becher (d. 1782), one of the senior agents of the East India Company in Bengal. It may seem exaggerated, but it is representative of other reports.

It must give pain to an Englishman to have Reason to think that since the accession of the Company to the *Diwani* [right to collect taxes] the condition of the people of this Country has been worse than it was before; and yet I am afraid the Fact is undoubted; . . . this fine Country, which flourished under the most despotic and arbitrary Government, is verging towards its Ruin. . . .

In Aliverdi Khan’s Time [1740–1756] the amount of the Revenue paid into the Treasury was much less than what comes in at present, but then the *Zemindars*, *Sarrafs* [bankers], Merchants, etc., were rich, and would at any time when an emergency required it supply the Nawab with a large sum, which they frequently did, particularly when he was at war with the Mahrattas. The Custom then was to settle a *Malgazari* [land assessment] with the different *Zemindars* on moderate terms: the Nawab abided by his agreement; the *Zemindars* had a natural Interest in their *Districts*, and gave proper encouragement to the *Ryots* [peasants], when necessary would wait for their Rents, and borrow Money to pay their own *Malgazari* punctually. There were in all the *Districts* *Sarrafs* ready to lend money to *Zemindars* when required, and even to the *Ryots*, which enabled many to cultivate their Grounds, which otherwise they could not have done. This mode of Collection and a free Trade . . . made this Country flourish even under an arbitrary Government, and at a Time when a large Tract of it was annually invaded by the Mahrattas, who burnt and destroyed all they could come at, the poor Inhabitants flying for shelter to the principal Cities, European Factories etc. The swelling of the Rivers at the approach of the Rains always obliged the Mahrattas to retire and the inhabitants were again secure till January. They having encouragement set immediately to work, and endeavoured to get their crops in, and sent to Market before the Time returned for the apprehended Invasion; insomuch that even under such Circumstances the Country was in a flourishing state and the *Zemindars* etc., able to pay the Nawab his requisitions the enormous sum of 1 Crore [ten million rupees] at one time and 50 lacs [a hundred thousand] at another, besides paying the *Malgazari*.

I mention this only with a view of showing what this fine Country is capable of under proper Management.

[From *The Making of British India, 1756–1858*, ed. Ramsay Muir (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1923), 92–93.]

SHAH ABD UL-AZIZ: ISLAM IN DANGER

As noted in volume 1, the status of non-Muslims had been a matter of controversy during periods when Turks and other Muslim rulers were establishing their authority in India. As a practical necessity, the rulers had tacitly accepted that Indians of other religions should be treated as *zimmīs*, that is, as tolerated and protected groups, the way Christians and Jews had been treated in the early Muslim empires. Many religious leaders argued, however, that rulers had a duty to convert non-Muslims, by force if necessary.

The political situation changed radically when the East India Company gained control, in the name of Great Britain, of vast areas of the Mughal Empire, including Bengal, the heartland of the Gangetic plain, and the historical capital of Delhi. At stake now was the relationship of Muslims to the new British rulers, who were frequently identified in religious terms as Christians, a name that recalled old antagonisms. Some religious leaders thought that Muslims could accommodate themselves to the British in matters of law, whereas others argued that they should not. This issue of obeying Western, or “Christian,” laws arose because of the close correspondence of law, both civil and criminal, with religious belief in Islam.

Shah Abd ul-Aziz (1746–1824) was one of the most influential Muslim scholars and teachers of his time in North India. The eldest son of Shah Wali Allah, the famous theologian, whose ideas on the nature of the relationship between Islam and the political state had a profound effect on later Islamic movements in India and Pakistan, Shah Abd ul-Aziz inherited the mantle of his father’s authority as a teacher and interpreter of Islamic law and faith. Father and son were both aware of what the weakening of Mughal power meant to Islam in India in the eighteenth century, and like many of their Muslim contemporaries they wondered whether a land that had originally been Dār ul-Islām, a land of (Islamic) peace, would become Dār ul-harb, a (non-Islamic) land of war, if it was conquered by non-Muslims.

Most jurists said that the criterion for action was the guarantee of freedom of religion: if Muslims could continue to practice their religion unhindered, then they were duty bound neither to migrate nor to wage war against their non-Muslim rulers. But the establishment of British power in Delhi in 1803 convinced Shah Abd ul-Aziz that British assurances of religious freedom were false and that the Islamic community was in grave danger; he issued a famous fatwa, or an authoritative interpretation of Islamic teaching for his followers, that has been cited, rightly or wrongly (Aziz got along well with the British on a personal basis, and was opposed to militant jihad), as a call to oppose the British. Some of his followers then and later believed that since Muslim law had been replaced by British law, India was no longer Dār ul-Islām, but

Dār ul-harb. If this was so, it was incumbent upon all believing Muslims to become *mujāhidīn*, fighters in a just war, against the infidel British. This is not the plain reading of the text, but, it was argued, it was the logic of the teaching. The fatwa is regarded as the first determined ideological expression of a conservative or fundamentalist Muslim attitude towards British rule, and was a factor in the serious uprising against the British in 1857–1858.

In this city [Delhi] the [Muslim religious leaders] wield no authority, while the decrees of the Christian leaders are obeyed. Promulgators of the commands of *kufr* [disbelief] means that in the administration of justice and matters of law and order, in the domain of trade, finance and collection of revenues, in the punishment of thieves and robbers, in the settlement of disputes—everywhere the *kuffār* [infidels] are in power. Yes, there are certain Islamic rituals with which they do not interfere . . . [such as Friday prayers, festivals, cow slaughter]; but the very root of these rituals is of no value to them. They demolish mosques without the least hesitation, and no Muslim or any *Zimmī* can enter into the city or its suburbs but with their permission. It is in their own interests if they do not object to the travellers and traders to visit the city. On the other hand, distinguished persons like Shujā'ul-Mulk and Wilāyatī Begum cannot dare visit the city without their permission. From here [Delhi] to Calcutta the Christians are in complete control. There is no doubt that in principalities like Hyderabad, Rampur, Lucknow, etc., they have left the administration in the hands of the local authorities; but it is because they have accepted their lordship and have submitted to their authority.

[Shāh Abd ul-Azīz, *Fatāwā-i-Azīziya*, trans. T. A. Nizami,
Muslim Political Thought and Activity in India
(Aligarh: T. M. Publications, 1969), 23, slight revisions.]

HARSUKH RAI'S EPITAPH FOR THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY: RECOGNITION OF THE WINNERS AND LOSERS

At the end of the century Harsukh Rai, descendant of a Hindu family that had served the Mughals for generations, watched the triumph of British arms over Indian rulers, and prepared, as he wrote his account, *Majma'u-l Akhbār*, to adjust to the new reality.

The Ranjīt Singh here is a local chieftain, not the famous Sikh ruler of the Punjab.

When, in the year 1218 A.H. (1803 A.D.), the British overcame the Mahrattas, and took possession of their territories, Ranjīt Singh was prudent enough to acknowledge ostensibly the supremacy of the British; but in the following year, on

the occasion of the march of the united force of the Mahratta chiefs, Daulat Rāo Sindhia and Jaswant Rāo Holkar, against the British, he joined the Mahrattas, in gratitude for their former good will and regard for him. When, in the latter part of the year, the British, after reducing, through the wisdom of their policy and sagacity, the strong forts of Dīg and Kishangarh, gallantly determined to take the fort of Bhartpūr, he with a valiant body of Jāts marched boldly to resist them.

It is said that these Jāts, in spite of the superior strength of the British, fell upon them regardless of life as moths of fire, committed great slaughter, and thus displayed their valour to the admiration of all who witnessed or heard of the fact. But when the rulers of Bengal and Bihār, the potentates of the Dakhin such as Haidar and Tīpū Sultān, the Mahrattas and others equal to [the Persian heroes] Rustam and Isfandiyār, have been worsted by the British army, what could be expected from that poor and helpless body? Their fight with the English is just as that of a musquito with an elephant, or of a moth with fire, a parrot with a hawk, or a goat with a lion! Indeed, these Englishmen emulate the great heroes who figure in ancient history.

[From *The History of India, As Told by its own Historians: The Mohammedan Period*, ed. Sir H. M. Elliot and John Dowson (London: Trübner and Co., 1877), 8:367–368.]



Chapter 2

THE EARLY TO MID NINETEENTH CENTURY

DEBATES OVER REFORM AND CHALLENGE TO EMPIRE

This chapter charts the themes and controversies galvanizing British and Indian elites from the late 1700s until the 1860s, and emphasizes early Indian (often Bengali, since Calcutta remained the center of cultural exchange in this early period) reactions and challenges to British education, religion, and political aggrandizement. The period is framed by the somewhat tolerant attitudes of early British Orientalists, men like Sir William Jones, founder of the Asiatic Society in 1784, and by the Rebellion of 1857, when sepoys of the East India Company turned against their officers, after which other segments of north Indian society defied the British in a threat to foreign rule. Over the first half of the nineteenth century, then, one finds increasing alienation among Indians, as they were forced to adjust to a European power that was expanding in terms of territory and was enunciating, justifying, and enforcing what it considered a maximally efficient style of governance. Throughout the same decades, however, many Indians learned English, some proclaimed the virtues of British presence in India, and some even converted to Christianity.

Ideologically, the first three decades of the century saw a transition in English political opinion from the Orientalists' relatively open, acculturative attitudes toward Indian customs, to the evangelical, utilitarian approach of missionaries and Anglicists. The triumph of the latter in the English Parliament had several results in India: the ban on missionary activity in India was lifted in 1813; Hindu College was founded in 1816 in Calcutta to impart Western education to Indian

youth; in 1835 English was substituted for Persian as the official language of government; and Fort William College, founded in 1800 to train Company recruits in Indian languages and customs, was closed.

Initial enthusiasm for English, especially among educated Hindus, is evidenced by the great popularity of Hindu College professor Henry V. Derozio, who taught a Western-style secular rationalism. But already the relation of Western to Indian learning was becoming a vexed issue. Rammohan Roy, active in Calcutta in the 1820s—just when the British were overcoming their earlier reluctance to interfere with established cultural patterns, and shortly before they took the decisive step, under the leadership of Thomas Babington Macaulay, of introducing English education—was in many ways a staunch Anglicist: he championed English law, literature, and reformist ideas. Yet he also resisted British hypocrisy, criticized Christian preachers, and turned to Hindu scriptures for wisdom and guidance. By the third quarter of the nineteenth century, most Indians, even if educated in English, were also engaged in recovering their own traditions; Ishvarchandra Vidyasagar, the writer and reformist champion of women's rights, strove all his life to wed the insights of Brahmanical and post-Enlightenment thought. Roy and Vidyasagar also shared with other contemporaries a reliance on scripture to justify their assertions—an indigenous debating strategy strengthened by the Orientalists' emphasis on textual authority.

For Hindus and Muslims, British interference in temple and mosque administration and in religious custom, such as the 1829 criminalization of sati (a practice in which a widow burned herself on her husband's funeral pyre) through the efforts of Rammohan Roy, and the passing of the Widow Remarriage Bill in 1856 through the efforts of Ishvarchandra Vidyasagar, caused intense debate. Should such meddling, enabled by liberal reformers, be tolerated? Could reforms, especially as concerned women, be adopted without compromise to the core of the tradition? To what extent could one find inspiration in the figure of Jesus without assenting to the particular teachings and activities of the missionaries? For all their differences, the views on Christianity represented below by Rammohan Roy and Nilakantha Goreh have much in common. Roy finds the ethical Jesus attractive, while to Goreh Christian teaching makes little sense. But both undercut missionary teaching by citing the Bible directly and using common sense; moreover, both came under intense pressure from Christian preachers.

For Muslim intellectuals the dominant questions of this period concerned the Mughal past, the status of the British-governed present, and the desired vision for the future. Some ulema or religious leaders argued with each other as to whether the replacement of the Mughals by the British meant that India could no longer be considered a land of peace, or *Dār ul-Islām*. Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, the greatest early Westernizing Muslim spokesman, while wanting to bring the richness of Western education to India, also desired to arouse in his Indo-Muslim contemporaries a pride in the Mughal period. But the response of Mirza Asadullah Khan "Ghalib," the greatest Urdu poet of the nineteenth cen-

tury, to Sir Sayyid's invitation to write a preface to a new edition of the *Ain-i Akbari*, demonstrates that not all Muslims wished to idealize an irretrievable past.

While reformists of this period, chiefly Hindu but also Muslim, were attentive to what Partha Chatterjee has called "the woman question" (that is, legal controversies over the appropriateness of child marriage, polygamy, and widow remarriage), women themselves seem to have been more concerned with the domestic freedoms that would allow them the opportunity to learn to read and write. Rassundari Devi (b. 1810) and Bibi Ashraf (b. 1840) both wrote firsthand accounts of their struggles to read and write within the confines of traditional households in which literacy was a right reserved for boys and men; their early attempts at self-education pave the way for women such as those we encounter in chapter 3, who produce sophisticated literature and contribute to regional and national culture.

At the end of our period, tensions inherent in increasingly strained relations of inequality found expression in the Rebellion of 1857, a bloody and vengeful chapter in Indo-British relations that greatly altered mutual perceptions. One can get a sense of the hopes, motivations, and experiences of the sepoys, the Emperor to whom they turned, and the intellectuals who watched from the sidelines, from various historic documents: the so-called Azamgarh Proclamation; an eyewitness account of the heroism of the Rani of Jhansi; the writings of the defeated Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah; Ghalib's descriptions of British rapacity; Queen Victoria's proclamation of 1858; and Sir Sayyid's ruminations on the causes of the Rebellion, chief among which were the ignorance, neglect, and even willful disregard by the government of the customs, practices, and conditions of "Hindustan." One final source—debates among Muslim ulema as to the religious status of India after the demise of the Mughal Empire—gives voice to the immediate ideological afterlife of the Rebellion.

The first sixty years of the nineteenth century are noteworthy both for what they do portend, and for what they do not. The effects of Western education were more far-reaching than anyone could have clearly imagined by 1857: they provided Indian thinkers with the tools and the motivation with which, much later, to work for independence. Some farsighted individuals had glimpses of this possibility, as can be seen in Derozio's odes on India, Rammohan Roy's comments on the future of his country, and even Macaulay's hopes for India's eventual freedom. By contrast, in these early decades we see little communal antagonism. Although the substitution of English for Persian had the effect of making Muslim elites less forward-looking than their Hindu counterparts, there was not yet any overt Hindu-Muslim sparring. The "father of the Hindu renaissance," Rammohan Roy, was more influenced by his Persian training and Muslim theological exposure than he was by the Hindu tradition of his parents. Most tellingly, the mainly Hindu army of sepoys who mutinied against their British officers in May 1857 rushed to Delhi to beg Bahadur Shah to lead them. That the Mughal Empire before 1857 had legitimacy as a symbol of authority

and status, for Hindus as well as Muslims, is, in a post-1947 world, hard—but important—to believe.

HENRY DEROZIO: POET AND EDUCATOR

One of the most brilliant figures in the intellectual world of Calcutta in the early nineteenth century was the poet Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (1809–1831). His father, a successful merchant, was probably of mixed Portuguese and Indian descent, while both his mother and the stepmother who brought him up were English. He thus belonged to a tiny Eurasian racial group accepted neither by the British ruling class nor by Hindu and Muslim society.

Derozio was raised as a Protestant and received the best English education then available in Calcutta. Nevertheless, his part-Indian ancestry meant that he could not hold a responsible government post. Finding office work for his father distasteful, he turned for a living to his uncle's indigo factory in the country. There, on the banks of the Ganges, he composed romantic poems, the publication of which made him the talk of Calcutta at the age of seventeen. Two years later, in 1828, he was appointed to a faculty position in English literature at the newly established Hindu College. Here he found his true calling, and in two years achieved an ascendancy over the minds and hearts of his students that lasted long after his premature death. He encouraged free thinking; employed secular rationalism to question orthodox Hindu customs and beliefs, including the existence of God; and urged a trust in human perfectibility and universal progress.

Derozio thus represented a different reaction to Western ideas than was being explored by contemporaries like Rammohan Roy and the Brahmo Sabha (later known as the "Brahmo Samaj"). Both criticized certain aspects of Indian religion. But while Roy urged a reconstruction of the Hindu tradition, searching in the ancient scriptures for precedents and justifications for modern thought, Derozio encouraged a rejection of that heritage. As is evident below in his romantic poem on India's future, Derozio's vision for India was a forward-looking hope of progress, not an idealization of, or a wish to return to, a Golden Past.

Hindu College had been founded by the Calcutta elite with the hope that it would inculcate in their sons the best of the new pragmatic knowledge coming from the West; there was no fear in the first decade of its existence that its teachers would Anglicize the youth or induce them to change their religion. But Derozio's influence caused concern; parents complained that their sons were cutting their hair, wearing European shoes, eating without bathing, and treating with condescension those of their elders who were ignorant of English. After some students were kept from attending the College out of protest, the board of managers demanded Derozio's resignation. Shortly thereafter, he died of cholera at the age of twenty-two, leaving a generation of "Derozians," who called themselves "Young Bengal," to carry on his work.

Derozio has had a mixed legacy. His tremendous popularity with the youth of his time, despite his linguistic, racial, and religious affinity with the foreign rulers of the

land, reflected the growing influence of Western thought among his peers. And yet he finds no mention in the works of Rammohan Roy, Michael Madhusudan Datta, Ishvarchandra Vidyasagar, Rabindranath Tagore, or Swami Vivekananda; his insistence on free-thinking must have proven more noteworthy than the rest of his ideas—especially at a time when his Eurasian ancestry would have been embarrassing to nationalist honor.

LETTER PROTESTING HIS DISMISSAL

In 1831 the resistance of orthodox Hindus to Derozio's criticisms of their religious tradition culminated in his ouster from Hindu College. One of the charges against Derozio was that he did not believe in the existence of God. To this he replied:

I have never denied the existence of a God in the hearing of any human being. If it be wrong to speak at all upon such a subject, I am guilty, but I am neither afraid, nor ashamed to confess having stated the doubts of philosophers upon this head, because I have also stated the solution of these doubts. Is it forbidden anywhere to argue upon such a question? If so it must be equally wrong to adduce an argument upon either side. Or is it consistent with an enlightened notion of truth to wed ourselves to only one view of so important a subject, resolving to close our eyes and ears against all impressions that oppose themselves to it?

How is any opinion to be strengthened but by completely comprehending the objections that are offered to it, and exposing their futility? And what have I done more than this? Entrusted as I was for some time with the education of youth peculiarly circumstanced, was it for me to have made them pert and ignorant dogmatists, by permitting them to know what could be said upon only one side of grave questions? . . . If the religious opinions of the students have become unhinged in consequence of the course I have pursued, the fault is not mine. To produce convictions was not within my power; and if I am to be condemned for the Atheism of some, let me receive credit for the Theism of others. Believe me, my dear Sir, I am too thoroughly imbued with a deep sense of human ignorance, and of the perpetual vicissitudes of opinion, to speak with confidence even of the most unimportant matters. Doubt and uncertainty besiege us too closely to admit the boldness of dogmatism to enter an enquiring mind; and far be it from me to say "this is" and "that is not," when after the most extensive acquaintance with the researches of science, and after the most daring flights of genius we must confess with sorrow and disappointment that humility becomes the highest wisdom, for the highest wisdom assures man of his ignorance.

[From *Poems of Henry Louis Vivian Derozio: A Forgotten Anglo-Indian Poet*, introduced by F. B. Bradley-Birt, with a new foreword by R. K. Das Gupta, 2nd ed. (1923; Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1980), xlv–xlvi, xlvii.]

POEM TO INDIA

Taking his cue from the patriotism of the Irish and English Romantic poets, Derozio dedicated two sonnets to India. These poems are virtually the first expression of the sentiment of Indian nationalism that in the twentieth century was to force the British to grant independence to India and Pakistan. We reproduce one of them here.

TO INDIA — MY NATIVE LAND

My country! in thy day of glory past
 A beauteous halo circled round thy brow,
 And worshiped as a deity thou wast.
 Where is that glory, where that reverence now?
 Thy eagle pinion is chained down at last,
 And groveling in the lowly dust art thou:
 Thy minstrel hath no wreath to weave for thee
 Save the sad story of thy misery!
 Well—let me dive into the depths of time,
 And bring from out the ages that have rolled
 A few small fragments of those wrecks sublime,
 Which human eye may never more behold;
 And let the guerdon of my labor be
 My fallen country! one kind wish from thee!

[From *Poems of Henry Louis Vivian Derozio*, 2.]

THE DECISION TO INTRODUCE ENGLISH EDUCATION

No single act of British policy has had a more lasting influence on the evolution of modern Indian thought than the decision in 1835 to use government funds to support education in the English language, and to adopt the curriculum prevalent in English schools. The East India Company, in its initial cautious desire to leave undamaged the traditional bases of Indian society, had decided as early as the 1770s to sponsor Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit studies. Later, when the Company became the paramount power in India, many Indians realized that to get jobs with the new government they would have to learn English, even though Persian continued to be used for official purposes well into the nineteenth century. The more farsighted among them, men like Rammohan Roy, saw that tremendous advantages could be gained by direct contact with the whole corpus of Western learning, and they therefore raised their voices against the antiquarian Company policy.

Indeed, Indians on their own initiative had been learning English since the mid-eighteenth century, if not earlier, in order to deal with these new rulers

who were also formidable traders. The establishment of Hindu College in 1816 by leaders in the Indian community, including Roy, to teach modern subjects using English, was a testament to Indian recognition of the value of an English education, a full two decades before the arrival of Macaulay.

The British Committee on Public Instruction was slow to react to the growing demand for a new educational system. When Thomas Babington Macaulay, fresh from England and thirty-four years old, was made its president in 1834, the committee was hopelessly divided between the “Anglicists,” who favored Anglicizing the education and government of India as much as possible, and the “Orientalists,” who believed that there was much wisdom to be gained from so-called Oriental, or Indian, texts and customs, and who thus tried to stem the tide of Anglicist change. Macaulay ended the stalemate by supporting the Anglicists.

The introduction of English education in India had profound social and political effects. The older elites were gradually replaced by a new class of Indians able to act as intermediaries between the British and those Indians with whom, for mercantile, taxation, or ruling purposes, they came into contact. English education also provided, for the privileged handful who could take advantage of it, specialized scientific knowledge, such as that offered in Calcutta from 1835 at the first British medical college of India; it also offered a common language and cultural background. Such conditions of all-India unity gave birth to political self-consciousness and eventually contributed to the rise of Indian nationalism.

A more ominous result was the effect of the new system on the relations between Hindus and Muslims. The substitution of English for Persian as the paramount language of government, diplomacy, and culture had unfortunate repercussions for the old elite of the Mughal Empire, who resented the intrusion of English and tended not to learn it. Available membership lists of elite, British–Indian educational and voluntary societies, as well as of government and missionary schools in mid-nineteenth century Calcutta, show an overwhelming preponderance of Hindu over Muslim names. As time passed, the cultural gap between the two communities widened, until some Muslim intellectuals realized that English-educated Hindus were dominating the scene both politically and economically. One consequence of the more long-standing Hindu attempt to evaluate age-old beliefs and customs in the light of European learning was a more publicly articulated sense of pride in the Hindu heritage and culture, which rendered eventual attempts at reconciliation with Muslim elites increasingly difficult.

SIR WILLIAM JONES: THE ORIENTALIST VIEWPOINT

The suspension of government support for the study of Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit was resisted by members of the Committee on Public Instruction who had studied these languages and discovered the riches contained in their literatures. The Orientalists owed much to the example of Sir William Jones (1746–1794), a brilliant pioneer of

Asian studies whose arrival in Calcutta in 1784 gave the decisive impulse to the founding of the Asiatick Society (now the Asiatic Society of Bengal).

PREFACE TO THE GRAMMAR OF THE PERSIAN LANGUAGE

Jones's preface to his *Grammar of the Persian Language* (1771) eloquently states the cultural and practical reasons Englishmen should master Persian. Note that the comparison of "East" and "West," here, and also in the writings of Thomas Babington Macaulay and Rammohan Roy below, marks a set of politically, not scientifically, defined colonial categories. Although the Orientalists were defeated on the question of educational policy, their high evaluation of India's classical heritage helped eventually to foster in English-educated Indians a pride in their own past that was of cardinal importance in the nineteenth-century "renaissance" of Hinduism and the rise of Hindu nationalism.

The Persian language is rich, melodious, and elegant; it has been spoken for many ages by the greatest princes in the politest courts of Asia; and a number of admirable works have been written in it by historians, philosophers, and poets, who found it capable of expressing with equal advantage the most beautiful and the most elevated sentiments.

It must seem strange, therefore, that the study of this language should be so little cultivated at a time when a taste for general and diffusive learning seems universally to prevail; and that the fine productions of a celebrated nation should remain in manuscript upon the shelves of our public libraries, without a single admirer who might open their treasures to his countrymen, and display their beauties to the light; but if we consider the subject with a proper attention, we shall discover a variety of causes which have concurred to obstruct the progress of Eastern literature.

Some men never heard of the Asiatick writings, and others will not be convinced that there is any thing valuable in them; some pretend to be busy, and others are really idle; some detest the Persians, because they believe in Mahomed, and others despise their language, because they do not understand it: we all love to excuse, or to conceal, our ignorance, and are seldom willing to allow any excellence beyond the limits of our own attainments: like the savages, who thought that the sun rose and set for them alone, and could not imagine that the waves, which surrounded their island, left coral and pearls upon any other shore. . . .

Since the literature of Asia was so much neglected, and the causes of that neglect were so various, we could not have expected that any slight power would rouse the nations of Europe from their inattention to it; and they would, perhaps, have persisted in despising it, if they had not been animated by the most powerful incentive that can influence the mind of man: . . . India; that rich and celebrated empire, which, by the flourishing state of our commerce, has been the source of incredible wealth to the merchants of Europe. . . . Our India Company began to take under their protection the princes of the country, by whose protection they gained their first settlement; a number of important affairs

were to be transacted in peace and war between nations equally jealous of one another, who had not the common instruments of conveying their sentiments; the servants of the company received letters which they could not read, and were ambitious of gaining titles of which they could not comprehend the meaning; it was found highly dangerous to employ the natives as interpreters, upon whose fidelity they could not depend; and it was at last discovered, that they must apply themselves to the study of the Persian language, in which all the letters from the Indian princes were written. A few men of parts and taste, who resided in Bengal, have since amused themselves with the literature of the East, and have spent their leisure in reading the poems and histories of Persia. . . .

The languages of Asia will now, perhaps, be studied with uncommon ardor; they are known to be useful, and will soon be found instructive and entertaining; the valuable manuscripts that enrich our publick libraries will be in a few years elegantly printed; the manners and sentiments of the Eastern nations will be perfectly known; and the limits of our knowledge will be no less extended than the bounds of our empire.

[From Sir William Jones, *A Grammar of the Persian Language*, 9th ed. updated by the Rev. Samuel Lee (London: W. Nicol, 1828), i–ii, vi–vii.]

RAMMOHAN ROY AND THE USELESSNESS OF ORIENTALIST POLICIES

Rammohan Roy, although he became almost friendless among Hindus in his own time, has since come to be seen as one of twentieth-century India's founding fathers because of his pioneering reforms in education, religion, morals, journalism, the status of women, and legal and political thought.

He was born (ca. 1774) into a Bengali Brahman family of the highest rank, but the foundations of his mature thought were laid down by his Persian studies at home and probably also in Patna. Persian was then the language not only of government service but also of humane letters, in most of northern India. Through Persian young Rammohan became familiar with Sufi ideas; through Persian and Arabic he absorbed Aristotelian logic and rhetoric, as well as the Greco-Islamic spirit of scholarly inquiry. His mother's family, who were Shaktas devoted to Goddess-worship, insisted that he steep himself in Sanskrit learning as well. Rammohan apparently preferred Persian to Sanskrit culture, and with it came to share the Islamic rejection of the use of image worship.

From 1815 to 1830 Rammohan engaged in numerous projects meant to enlighten the minds and improve the lot of his countrymen. He campaigned against the worship of gods and goddesses and their images, believing such worship to be the root of all superstitious and inhumane Hindu practices. To add weight to this thesis, he rendered into Bengali and English the *Kena*, *Īshā*, *Katha*, and *Mundaka Upanishads*, along with other, Vedantic texts, so wording them as to emphasize the unity and power of God—a monotheistic emphasis quite different from the monism in the original Sanskrit texts. Possibly Rammohan's transcreations were influenced by the

Persian versions of the Upanishads prepared at the behest of the unfortunate Mughal prince Dara Shikoh. Calcutta's orthodox Brahmans were outraged at Rammohan's attacks on their ways of worship, and virtually ostracized him. In 1820 he published *The Precepts of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness*, a compilation of the nontheological teachings of Jesus, because he found these teachings "more conducive to moral principles, and better adapted for the use of rational beings, than any others which have come to my knowledge."¹ British Protestant ministers denounced his omission of references to the divinity or miraculous powers of Jesus, and he spent three further years of research and writing in defending his approach. So cogent were his arguments against the doctrine of the Trinity that he converted to Unitarianism a Baptist missionary with whom he was translating the New Testament into Bengali.

In the 1820s Rammohan became increasingly active in efforts to improve the educational, social, and political conditions of Calcutta and its environs. He founded schools, wrote textbooks, published weekly newspapers in Bengali, English, and Persian, and vigorously opposed both British plans to support Sanskrit studies, and the Hindu custom of sati (Anglicized in Rammohan's time as suttee). On behalf of Calcutta's leading citizens, he wrote petitions protesting the 1823 restrictions of the freedom of the press, and the 1827 Jury Act excluding Hindus and Muslims from juries in cases where Christians were the accused. (Both measures were eventually withdrawn.) He also founded in 1828, with a group of like-minded Hindu monotheists, the Brahmo Sabha (later, the Brahmo Samaj)—the "society of the worshipers of the one true God."

In the last years of his life Rammohan made the five-month sea voyage to England, despite the taboo against crossing "the black waters."² In London, he presented to a committee of Parliament recommendations on ways to improve the government of India, inquired about the possibility of becoming a Member of Parliament himself, was honored with a dinner by the directors of the East India Company, and was presented to the king. Finally, ill and bankrupt, he died in Bristol in 1833 in the company of his English Unitarian friends. His epitaph, chosen by himself from the works of the Persian poet Saadi, reads: "The true way of serving God is to do good to man."

For his strategic reinterpretation of Hindu religious thought, and for his many efforts to enlighten his society and improve its customs, Rammohan Roy has been termed by later generations "the father of modern India." Although recent scholarship has undercut the primacy of liberal Bengali intellectuals in the reconstruction of colonial history, has found fault with Roy's reading of the Upanishads, and has questioned the assumption of a continuous link between Roy and the shape of the later Brahmo Samaj, Rammohan was without a doubt one of the first Indian scholars to probe deeply into the religious and political foundations of British culture and society. In doing so, he was able to choose what struck him as beneficial (the ethical teachings of Jesus, governmental guarantees of civil and religious liberty, and modern secular knowledge), and to reject those that did not (Christian theology, and British autocratic government in India).

A LETTER ON EDUCATION

Having established at his own expense schools where young men could acquire through both English and Bengali the best and most modern education available, Rammohan was shocked when the government decided in 1823 to found and support a new college for Sanskrit studies. These excerpts from his letter of protest show how highly he valued the knowledge and ways of thinking developed in Europe since the time of Francis Bacon.

The establishment of a new Sanscrit School in Calcutta evinces the laudable desire of government to improve the Natives of India by Education—a blessing for which they must ever be grateful; and every well-wisher of the human race must be desirous that the efforts made to promote it should be guided by the most enlightened principles, so that the stream of intelligence may flow in the most useful channels.

When this Seminary of learning was proposed, we understood that the Government in England had ordered a considerable sum of money to be annually devoted to the instruction of its Indian Subjects. We were filled with sanguine hopes that this sum would be laid out in employing European Gentlemen of talent and education to instruct the Natives of India in Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy, and other useful Sciences, which the Natives of Europe have carried to a degree of perfection that has raised them above the inhabitants of other parts of the world. . . .

We find that the Government are establishing a Sanscrit school under Hindoo pandits to impart such knowledge as is already current in India. This seminary (similar in character to those which existed in Europe before the time of Lord Bacon) can only be expected to load the minds of youth with grammatical niceties and metaphysical distinctions of little or no practicable use to the possessors or to society. The pupils will there acquire what was known two thousand years ago, with the addition of vain and empty subtleties since then produced by speculative men, such as is already commonly taught in all parts of India. . . .

Neither can much improvement arise from such speculations as the following, which are the themes suggested by the Vedant: In what manner is the soul absorbed in the Deity? What relation does it bear to the Divine Essence? Nor will youths be fitted to be better members of society by the Vedantic doctrines which teach them to believe that all visible things have no real existence; that as father, brother, etc., have no actual entity, they consequently deserve no real affection, and therefore the sooner we escape from them and leave the world the better. Again, . . . the student of the Nyaya Shastra cannot be said to have improved his mind after he has learned from it into how many ideal classes the objects in the

Universe are divided, and what speculative relation the soul bears to the body, the body to the soul, the eye to the ear, etc. . . .

In presenting this subject to your Lordship, I conceive myself discharging a solemn duty which I owe to my countrymen, and also to that enlightened Sovereign and Legislature which have extended their benevolent cares to this distant land, actuated by a desire to improve the inhabitants, and I therefore humbly trust you will excuse the liberty I have taken in thus expressing my sentiments to your Lordship.

I have the honor, etc.

Rammohun Roy

[From *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy*, 4 vols., ed. Jogendra Chunder Ghose, with an English translation of *Tuhfatul Muwahhidin* (New Delhi: Cosmo, 1982), 2:471–472, 473, 474.]

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY AND THE CASE FOR ENGLISH EDUCATION

Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800–1859), British essayist, historian, politician, and public official, was a precocious poet, educated at Cambridge, called to the bar in 1826, and elected to Parliament in 1830. He distinguished himself as a Whig orator. Macaulay first took an interest in British policy toward India in 1833, when the Government of India Bill was under discussion. Shortly thereafter he accepted an opportunity to serve on the Supreme Council of the East India Company in Calcutta, then capital of India, from 1834 to 1838. Asked to settle the question of the most appropriate medium of instruction or language for higher education in India, he wrote his famous “Minute on Education.”

Macaulay also helped to codify Indian law, before returning to his political and literary career in Great Britain. He held several high offices and was reelected to Parliament several times. He wrote poetry and many essays, including notable ones on Warren Hastings and Lord Clive. Though in ill health, he completed five volumes of his *History of England from the Accession of James II* before he died in 1859.

SPEECH TO PARLIAMENT ON THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA BILL

This first selection comes from Macaulay’s speech on the Government of India Bill of 1833, and expresses his view of the achievements and goals of the British Empire in India. Given Macaulay’s reputation as an Anglicist and ardent critic of Indian learning, it is fascinating to read of his hopes that eventually Britain would set India free.

I feel that, for the good of India itself, the admission of natives to high office must be effected by slow degrees. But that, when the fulness of time is come, when the interest of India requires the change, we ought to refuse to make that

change lest we should endanger our own power, this is a doctrine of which I cannot think without indignation. Governments, like men, may buy existence too dear. "Propter vitam vivendi perdere causas," ["To lose the reason for living, for the sake of staying alive"] is a despicable policy both in individuals and in states. In the present case, such a policy would be not only despicable, but absurd. The mere extent of empire is not necessarily an advantage. To many governments it has been cumbersome; to some it has been fatal. It will be allowed by every statesman of our time that the prosperity of a community is made up of the prosperity of those who compose the community, and that it is the most childish ambition to covet dominion which adds to no man's comfort or security. To the great trading nation, to the great manufacturing nation, no progress which any portion of the human race can make in knowledge, in taste for the conveniences of life, or in the wealth by which those conveniences are produced, can be matter of indifference. It is scarcely possible to calculate the benefits which we might derive from the diffusion of European civilisation among the vast population of the East. It would be, on the most selfish view of the case, far better for us that the people of India were well governed and independent of us, than ill governed and subject to us; that they were ruled by their own kings, but wearing our broadcloth, and working with our cutlery, than that they were performing their salams to English collectors and English magistrates, but were too ignorant to value, or too poor to buy, English manufactures. To trade with civilised men is infinitely more profitable than to govern savages. That would, indeed, be a doting wisdom, which, in order that India might remain a dependency, would make it an useless and costly dependency, which would keep a hundred millions of men from being our customers in order that they might continue to be our slaves.

Are we to keep the people of India ignorant in order that we may keep them submissive? Or do we think that we can give them knowledge without awakening ambition? Or do we mean to awaken ambition and to provide it with no legitimate vent? Who will answer any of these questions in the affirmative? Yet one of them must be answered in the affirmative, by every person who maintains that we ought permanently to exclude the natives from high office. I have no fears. The path of duty is plain before us: and it is also the path of wisdom, of national prosperity, of national honor.

[Thomas Babington Macaulay, "Speech in Parliament on the Government of India Bill, 10 July 1833," in *Prose and Poetry*, by Macaulay, selected by G. M. Young (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 716–717, 718.]

THE MINUTE ON EDUCATION

In the following "Minute," Macaulay argues that the learned languages of India are not up to the task of education in modern subjects and have little to offer even in literature and philosophy. That he knew little of these languages did not stop him from deriding

them and declaring that English was the most important modern language and would be best for higher studies in India. Colleges receiving government funds would use English, if Macaulay's plans were followed. In fact, both government colleges and others started by European missionaries and English-speaking natives also began to use English. His "Minute" also touches on several broader issues, including the relation of Western and Asian cultures and the ways in which a small number of Europeans were to rule in a vast alien land peopled by millions of Asians. His decision for English was accepted—English education was formally institutionalized, with a comprehensive scheme for its implementation, with Wood's Education Despatch of 1854—and Indians have lived with the consequences for generations since.

We now come to the gist of the matter. We have a fund to be employed as government shall direct for the intellectual improvement of the people of this country. The simple question is, what is the most useful way of employing it?

All parties seem to be agreed on one point, that the dialects commonly spoken among the natives of this part of India contain neither literary nor scientific information, and are, moreover, so poor and rude that, until they are enriched from some other quarter, it will not be easy to translate any valuable work into them. It seems to be admitted on all sides that the intellectual improvement of those classes of the people who have the means of pursuing higher studies can at present be effected only by means of some language not vernacular amongst them.

What then shall that language be? One-half of the committee maintain that it should be the English. The other half strongly recommend the Arabic and Sanscrit. The whole question seems to me to be, which language is the best worth knowing?

I have no knowledge of either Sanscrit or Arabic. But I have done what I could to form a correct estimate of their value. I have read translations of the most celebrated Arabic and Sanscrit works. I have conversed both here and at home with men distinguished by their proficiency in the Eastern tongues. I am quite ready to take the Oriental learning at the valuation of the Orientalists themselves. I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. The intrinsic superiority of the Western literature is, indeed, fully admitted by those members of the committee who support the Oriental plan of education.

It will hardly be disputed, I suppose, that the department of literature in which the Eastern writers stand highest is poetry. And I certainly never met with any Orientalist who ventured to maintain that the Arabic and Sanscrit poetry could be compared to that of the great European nations. But when we pass from works of imagination to works in which facts are recorded, and general principles investigated, the superiority of the Europeans becomes absolutely immeasurable. It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say, that all the historical informa-

tion which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanscrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgments used at preparatory schools in England. In every branch of physical or moral philosophy, the relative position of the two nations is nearly the same. . . .

The question now before us is simply whether, when it is in our power to teach this language, we shall teach languages in which, by universal confession, there are no books on any subject which deserve to be compared to our own; whether, when we can teach European science, we shall teach systems which, by universal confession, whenever they differ from those of Europe, differ for the worse; and whether, when we can patronize sound philosophy and true history, we shall countenance, at the public expense, medical doctrines which would disgrace an English farrier, astronomy which would move laughter in girls at an English boarding school, history abounding with kings thirty feet high and reigns thirty thousand years long, and geography, made up of seas of treacle and seas of butter. . . .

[*Answering the claims of the Orientalists, he asserted:*] But there is yet another argument which seems even more untenable. It is said that the Sanscrit and Arabic are the languages in which the sacred books of a hundred millions of people are written, and that they are, on that account, entitled to peculiar encouragement. Assuredly it is the duty of the British government in India to be not only tolerant, but neutral on all religious questions. But to encourage the study of a literature admitted to be of small intrinsic value, only because that literature inculcates the most serious errors on the most important subjects, is a course hardly reconcilable with reason, with morality, or even with that very neutrality which ought, as we all agree, to be sacredly preserved. It is confessed that a language is barren of useful knowledge. We are to teach it because it is fruitful of monstrous superstitions. We are to teach false history, false astronomy, false medicine, because we find them in company with a false religion. We abstain, and I trust shall always abstain, from giving any public encouragement to those who are engaged in the work of converting natives to Christianity. And while we act thus, can we reasonably and decently bribe men out of the revenues of the state to waste their youth in learning how they are to purify themselves after touching an ass, or what text of the Vedas they are to repeat to expiate the crime of killing a goat?

It is taken for granted by the advocates of Oriental learning that no native of this country can possibly attain more than a mere smattering of English. They do not attempt to prove this; but they perpetually insinuate it. They designate the education which their opponents recommend as a mere spelling book education. They assume it as undeniable, that the question is between a profound knowledge of Hindoo and Arabian literature and science on the one side, and a superficial knowledge of the rudiments of English on the other. This is not merely an assumption, but an assumption contrary to all reason and experience. We know that foreigners of all nations do learn our language sufficiently to

have access to all the most abstruse knowledge which it contains, sufficiently to relish even the more delicate graces of our most idiomatic writers. There are in this very town natives who are quite competent to discuss political or scientific questions with fluency and precision in the English language. I have heard the very question on which I am now writing discussed by native gentlemen with a liberality and an intelligence which would do credit to any member of the Committee of Public Instruction. Indeed it is unusual to find, even in the literary circles of the continent, any foreigner who can express himself in English with so much facility and correctness as we find in many Hindoos. Nobody, I suppose, will contend that English is so difficult to a Hindoo as Greek to an Englishman. Yet an intelligent English youth, in a much smaller number of years than our unfortunate pupils pass at the Sanscrit College, becomes able to read, to enjoy, and even to imitate, not unhappily, the compositions of the best Greek authors. Less than half the time which enables an English youth to read Herodotus and Sophocles ought to enable a Hindoo to read Hume and Milton.

To sum up what I have said, I think it clear that we are not fettered by the Act of Parliament of 1813; that we are not fettered by any pledge expressed or implied; that we are free to employ our funds as we choose; that we ought to employ them in teaching what is best worth knowing; that English is better worth knowing than Sanscrit or Arabic; that the natives are desirous to be taught English, and are not desirous to be taught Sanscrit or Arabic; that neither as the languages of law, nor as the languages of religion, have the Sanscrit and Arabic any peculiar claim to our engagement; that it is possible to make natives of this country thoroughly good English scholars; and that to this end our efforts ought to be directed.

In one point I fully agree with the gentlemen to whose general views I am opposed. I feel with them, that it is impossible for us, with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population.

[Macaulay, *Prose and Poetry*, 721–722, 723, 728–729.]

RAMMOHAN ROY: PIONEER IN EAST–WEST EXCHANGE

As has been indicated in the introduction to Roy above, in addition to his views on education he is remembered for a wide range of opinions, writings, and activities, all of which indicate his impressive mastery of Indian and Western learning.

HOW THE BRITISH TOOK CONTROL OF INDIA

Rammohan's statements on the decline of the Mughal Empire and the rise of the British reflected the attitudes of those in the coastal provinces (Bengal, Bombay, and Madras) who welcomed what they perceived to be the peace, civil and religious liberties, and commerce introduced by their new rulers. The influence on Roy by the colonialist discourse of his day, in relation to descriptions of Indian character, is evident in his portrayal of oppressive Muslim rulers and debilitated Bengali natives.

The greater part of Hindustan having been for several centuries subject to Muhammadan Rule, the civil and religious rights of its original inhabitants were constantly trampled upon, and from the habitual oppression of the conquerors, a great body of the subjects in the Southern Peninsula (Dukhin [or Deccan]), afterwards called Marhattahs [Marathas], and another body in the western parts now styled Sikhs, were at last driven to revolt; and when the Mussalman power became feeble, they ultimately succeeded in establishing their independence; but the natives of Bengal wanting vigor of body, and adverse to active exertion, remained during the whole period of the Muhammadan conquest, faithful to the existing Government, although their property was often plundered, their religion insulted, and their blood wantonly shed. Divine providence at last, in its abundant mercy, stirred up the English nation to break the yoke of those tyrants, and to receive the oppressed Natives of Bengal under its protection. Having made Calcutta the capital of their dominions, the English distinguished this city by such peculiar marks of favour, as a free people would be expected to bestow, in establishing an English court of judicature, and granting to all within its jurisdiction, the same civil rights as every Briton enjoys in his native country; thus putting the Natives of India in possession of such privileges as their forefathers never expected to attain, even under Hindu Rulers. . . . Under the cheering influence of equitable and indulgent treatment, and stimulated by the example of a people famed for their wisdom and liberality, the Natives of India, with the means of amelioration set before them, have been gradually advancing in social and intellectual improvement.

[From Roy, "Appeal to the King in Council" (1823), in
The English Works, 4:11–12.]

THE NEED FOR A MORE HUMANE MORALITY AND A PURER MODE OF WORSHIP

The theological basis of the organization that Rammohan Ray founded in 1828, the Brahmo Sabha (later to be Brahmo Samaj), was his theistic reading of the Upanishads, which he interpreted as promulgating a nonritualistic, interior worship of the One True Being. In introducing his rendering of the *Katha Upanishad* into English and

Bengali, Rammohan stated the principle he was later to put to the Christian missionaries: worship the one true God, and out of a purified heart treat others justly and kindly.

The advocates of idolatry and their misguided followers, over whose opinions prejudice and obstinacy prevail more than good sense and judgment, prefer custom and fashion to the authorities of their scriptures, and therefore continue, under the form of religious devotion, to practise a system which destroys, to the utmost degree, the natural texture of society, and prescribes crimes of the most heinous nature, which even the most savage nations would blush to commit, unless compelled by the most urgent necessity. I am, however, not without a sanguine hope that, through Divine Providence and human exertions, they will sooner or later avail themselves of that true system of religion which leads its observers to a knowledge and love of God, and to a friendly inclination towards their fellow-creatures, impressing their hearts at the same time with humility and charity, accompanied by independence of mind and pure sincerity. Contrary to the code of idolatry, this system defines sin as evil thoughts proceeding from the heart, quite unconnected with observances as to diet and other matters of form. At any rate, it seems to me that I cannot better employ my time than in an endeavour to illustrate and maintain truth, and to render service to my fellow-labourers, confiding in the mercy of that Being to whom the motives of our actions and secrets of our hearts are well known.

[From Roy, *The English Works*, 1:45–46.]

HINDUISM IS NOT INFERIOR TO CHRISTIANITY

Although he urged his countrymen to feel no resentment toward the missionaries, but only “compassion, on account of their blindness to the errors in which they themselves have fallen,” Rammohan Roy was less than compassionate in his reply to a public letter charging him with having insulted, through his *Precepts of Jesus*, the Christian religion. In this, his most extreme statement in defense of Hindu culture and religion, he advanced views that are still widely held in India today. The *Bengali Hurkaru* was an English-language newspaper.

If, by the “ray of intelligence” for which the Christian says we are indebted to the English, he means the introduction of useful mechanical arts, I am ready to express my assent and also my gratitude; but with respect to science, literature, or religion, I do not acknowledge that we are placed under any obligation. For by a reference to History it may be proved that the world was indebted to our ancestors for the first dawn of knowledge, which sprang up in the East, and thanks to the Goddess of Wisdom, we have still a philosophical and copious language of our own which distinguishes us from other nations who cannot express scientific or abstract ideas without borrowing the language of foreigners. . . .

Before “A Christian” indulged in a tirade about persons being “degraded by *Asiatic* effeminacy” he should have recollected that almost all of the ancient prophets and patriarchs venerated by Christians, nay even Jesus Christ himself, a Divine incarnation and the *founder* of the Christian faith, were Asiatics. So that if a Christian thinks it degrading to be born or reside in Asia, he directly reflects upon them. . . .

It is unjust in the Christian to quarrel with Hindoos because (he says) they cannot comprehend the sublime mystery of his religion [the Doctrine of the Trinity]; since he is equally unable to comprehend the sublime mysteries of ours, and since both these mysteries equally transcend the human understanding, one cannot be preferred to the other.

[From a letter to the editor of the *Bengali Hurkaru*
(May 23, 1823), in *The English Works*, 4:906, 908.]

IN DEFENSE OF HINDU WOMEN

In a letter to an American friend, Rammohan Roy stated his willingness to support the moral principles preached by Jesus “even at the risk of my own life.” Roy actually did risk his life during his arduous campaign against the practice of sati. The threats of conservative Hindus notwithstanding, Rammohan helped the British to overcome their doubts about proscribing the custom. Having devastated his imaginary opponent by references to the highest Sanskrit authorities, he concluded his *Second Conference Between an Advocate for and an Opponent of the Practice of Burning Widows Alive* with an appeal to justice and mercy and a passionate defense of the rights of women.

Advocate: I alluded . . . to the real reason for our anxiety to persuade widows to follow their husbands, and for our endeavors to burn them pressed down with ropes: viz., that women are by nature of inferior understanding, without resolution, unworthy of trust, subject to passions, and void of virtuous knowledge; they, according to the precepts of the Sastra, are not allowed to marry again after the demise of their husbands, and consequently despair at once of all worldly pleasure; hence it is evident, that death to these unfortunate widows is preferable to existence, for the great difficulty which a widow may experience by living a purely ascetic life as prescribed by the Sastras is obvious; therefore if she do not perform Con-cremation [being burnt alive at her husband’s cremation], it is probable that she may be guilty of such acts as may bring disgrace upon her paternal and maternal relations, and those that may be connected with her husband. Under these circumstances, we instruct them from their early life in the idea of Con-cremation, holding out to them heavenly enjoyments in company with their husbands, as well as the beatitude of their relations, both by birth and marriage, and their reputation in this world. From this many of them, on the death of their husbands, become desirous of accompanying them; but to

remove every chance of their trying to escape from the blazing fire, in burning them we first tie them down to the pile.

Opponent: The reason you have now assigned for burning widows alive is indeed your true motive, as we are well aware; but the faults which you have imputed to women are not planted in their constitution by nature; it would be, therefore, grossly criminal to condemn that sex to death merely from precaution. By ascribing to them all sorts of improper conduct, you have indeed successfully persuaded the Hindoo community to look down upon them as contemptible and mischievous creatures, whence they have been subjected to constant miseries. I have, therefore, to offer a few remarks on this head.

Women are in general inferior to men in bodily strength and energy; consequently the male part of the community, taking advantage of their corporeal weakness, have denied to them those excellent merits that they are entitled to by nature, and afterwards they are apt to say that women are naturally incapable of acquiring those merits. But if we give the subject consideration, we may easily ascertain whether or not your accusation against them is consistent with justice. As to their inferiority in point of understanding, when did you ever afford them a fair opportunity of exhibiting their natural capacity? How then can you accuse them of want of understanding? . . .

Secondly. You charge them with want of resolution, at which I feel exceedingly surprised. For we constantly perceive, in a country where the name of death makes the male shudder, that the female, from her firmness of mind, offers to burn with the corpse of her deceased husband. . . .

Thirdly. With regard to their trustworthiness, let us look minutely into the conduct of both sexes, and we may be enabled to ascertain which of them is the most frequently guilty of betraying friends. If we enumerate such women in each village or town as have been deceived by men, and such men as have been betrayed by women, I presume that the number of the deceived women would be found ten times greater than that of the betrayed men. . . .

In the fourth place, with respect to their subjection to the passions, this may be judged of by the custom of marriage as to the respective sexes; for one man may marry two or three, sometimes even ten wives and upwards; while a woman, who marries but one husband, desires at his death to follow him, forsaking all worldly enjoyments, or to remain leading the austere life of an ascetic.

Fifthly. The accusation of their want of virtuous knowledge is an injustice. Observe what pain, what slighting, what contempt, and what afflictions their virtue enables them to support! How many Kulin³ Brahmans are there who marry ten or fifteen wives for the sake of money, that never see the greater number of them after the day of marriage, and visit others only three or four times in the course of their life? Still amongst those women, most, even without seeing or receiving any support from their husbands, living dependent on their fathers or brothers, and suffering much distress, continue to preserve their virtue. And

when Brahmans, or those of other tribes, bring their wives to live with them, what misery do the women not suffer? At marriage the wife is recognized as half of her husband, but in after-conduct they are treated worse than inferior animals. . . . If, unable to bear such cruel usage, a wife leaves her husband's house to live separately from him, then the influence of the husband with the magisterial authority is generally sufficient to place her again in his hands; when, in revenge for her quitting him, he seizes every pretext to torment her in various ways, and sometimes even puts her privately to death. These are facts occurring every day, and not to be denied. What I lament is, that, seeing the women thus dependent and exposed to every misery, you feel for them no compassion that might exempt them from being tied down and burnt to death.

[From Roy, *The English Works*, 2:359–360, 361–362, 363.]

FOR FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

In 1823 the East India Company promulgated an ordinance restricting the freedom of the press by requiring all newspapers to be licensed under terms laid down by the government. Rammohan Roy responded by drawing up a memorial to the Supreme Court on behalf of the Indian community, in which he argued that their loyalty depended on the continuing enjoyment of those civil liberties that had reconciled them to British rule—an argument echoed later by many an Indian nationalist.

After this Rule and Ordinance shall have been carried into execution, your Memorialists are therefore extremely sorry to observe, that a complete stop will be put to the diffusion of knowledge and the consequent mental improvement now going on, either by translations into the popular dialect of this country from the learned languages of the East, or by the circulation of literary intelligence drawn from foreign publications. And the same cause will also prevent those Natives who are better versed in the laws and customs of the British Nation, from communicating to their fellow-subjects a knowledge of the admirable system of Government established by the British, and the peculiar excellencies of the means they have adopted for the strict and impartial administration of justice. Another evil of equal importance in the eyes of a just Ruler; is, that it will also preclude the Natives from making the Government readily acquainted with the errors and injustice that may be committed by its executive officers in the various parts of this extensive country; and it will also preclude the Natives from communicating frankly and honestly to their Gracious Sovereign in England and his Council, the real condition of His Majesty's faithful subjects in this distant part of his dominions and the treatment they experience from the local government; since such information cannot in future be conveyed to England, as it has heretofore been, either by the translations from the Native publications inserted in the English Newspapers printed here and sent to Europe, or

by the English publications which the Natives themselves had in contemplation to establish, before this Rule and Ordinance was proposed.

After this sudden deprivation of one of the most precious of their rights, which has been freely allowed them since the establishment of the British power, a right which they are not, and cannot, be charged with having ever abused, the inhabitants of Calcutta would be no longer justified in boasting, that they are fortunately placed by Providence under the protection of the whole British Nation, or that the king of England and his Lords and Commons are their legislators, and that they are secured in the enjoyment of the same civil and religious privileges that every Briton is entitled to in England. . . .

[From Roy, *The English Works*, 2:441–442.]

THE FUTURE OF INDIA

In a letter of 1828 to an English friend Roy predicted with remarkable accuracy the rise of Indian nationalism. But he also indicated that enlightened and democratic government might prolong the connection between India and Britain to their mutual advantage.

Supposing that one hundred years hence the Native character becomes elevated from constant intercourse with Europeans and the acquirement of general and political knowledge as well as of modern arts and sciences, is it possible that they will not have the spirit as well as the inclination to resist effectually any unjust and oppressive measures serving to degrade them in the scale of society? It should not be lost sight of that the position of India is very different from that of Ireland, to any quarter of which an English fleet may suddenly convey a body of troops that may force its way in the requisite direction and succeed in suppressing every effort of a refractory spirit. Were India to share one fourth of the knowledge and energy of that country, she would prove from her remote situation, her riches and her vast population, either useful and profitable as a willing province, an ally of the British Empire, or troublesome and annoying as a determined enemy.

In common with those who seem partial to the British rule from the expectation of future benefits, arising out of the connection, I necessarily feel extremely grieved in often witnessing Acts and Regulations passed by Government without consulting or seeming to understand the feelings of its Indian subjects and without considering that this people have had for more than half a century the advantage of being ruled by and associated with an enlightened nation, advocates of liberty and promoters of knowledge.

[From Roy, *The English Works*, 1:xxiii.]

ISHVARCHANDRA VIDYASAGAR: SOCIAL REFORMER AND CHAMPION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Ishvarchandra Vidyasagar (1820–1891) was a multifaceted individual who made signal contributions in many areas of Bengali intellectual life in the mid-nineteenth century: he was a Sanskrit pandit, an educator, the author of famous children's alphabet teaching books, a publisher, a philanthropist, and a social reformer noted for his interventions on behalf of girl children, widows, and women trapped in polygamous marriages to Kulin Brahmins. Born in rural western Bengal to an orthodox Brahmin family (his given last name was Bandyopadhyay; Vidyasagar, or “Ocean of Learning,” was an honorific title bestowed upon him in college when he was nineteen), Vidyasagar spent much of his early adult life affiliated with Sanskrit College, where he studied as a student and then later returned to serve as principal until 1858. Sanskrit College had been established under the patronage of Orientalist Britons: all its teachers were pandits, and the education they offered was modeled on traditional Sanskrit learning. However, Vidyasagar was open to the riches of both English and Bengali, and he tried to create what a recent scholar has called “an enlightened vernacular,” through which teachers could expose students to English and Sanskrit learning, while also grounding them in the Bengali literary tradition.⁴ Indeed, Vidyasagar was always looking for meeting points between the worldviews of Brahmanical and post-Enlightenment thought.

Not just an educator, Vidyasagar was also a writer; his first prose work, *The Twenty-Five Tales of a Betāl*, appeared in 1846, *Shakuntalā* in 1855, and then his greatest work, *The Exile of Sītā*, in 1862. Together with Rammohan Roy and Akshaykumar Datta (1820–1886), Vidyasagar is considered one of the pioneers of Bengali prose, departing from the poetic traditions of pre-nineteenth-century Bengali composition. Fairly wealthy from the sales of his school books, he engaged in numerous acts of charity and philanthropy: he funded the education of many needy young men, and donated money for the upkeep of impecunious widows.

Like Rammohan Roy, whose name is forever associated with the criminalization of sati in 1829, Vidyasagar is perhaps best known for his untiring efforts to ameliorate the lot of Bengali widows. Although he had written on the subject of social injustice to women as early as the late 1840s, in 1853 he began to work in earnest to persuade the British formally to legalize the remarriage of Hindu widows and to accord the sons of such remarried widows legitimacy as heirs. In this he was following the lead of the Derozians, who suggested as early as 1842 in their organ *The Bengal Spectator* that at least some Hindu texts on dharma contained no bar to widow remarriage. In his *Remarriage of Hindu Widows* (1855), he agreed, arguing that perpetual widowhood was not, in fact, enjoined in the Dharmashastras (he found an approving discussion of widow remarriage in the *Parasāra Samhitā*, one of the twenty well-known Dharmashastras). The result was a storm of protest in Hindu intellectual circles; but in spite of vociferous attacks he managed to convince the British to pass Act XV of 1856, which accorded to widows the right to remarry. In later life, in the mid-1860s, he attempted to repeat his

earlier success by campaigning against Kulinism (the Hindu custom that allows men from certain Brahman lineages to take multiple wives), but this ended in failure.

In his own time Vidyasagar was both vilified and adored. Like Rammohan Roy, he used the authority of Hindu scriptures to buttress his rational arguments for social reform, and he found exposure to Western thought helpful in the formulation of his own Indian identity. But partly because he lived several decades after Roy, in a time when British Orientalist policies had given way to a hardening imperialist and Westernizing vision, he was less of an Anglicist.

It is important to note that in spite of the liberal social agendas of elite Hindus like Roy and Vidyasagar, they were not challenging obligatory marriage, arranged marriage, compulsory heterosexuality, or the patriarchal family system.

ARGUMENTS FOR THE COMPASSIONATE TREATMENT OF GIRLS AND WOMEN

Juxtaposed here are selections from two essays written about the plight of women: “The Evils of Child Marriage,” his first essay on reform from 1849; and “Remarriage of Hindu Widows,” from 1855. The two styles of argumentation are strikingly different: the first essay relies only upon rational argument and the evocation of a humanist compassion, whereas the second bases its conclusions on scriptural authority. Note that Vidyasagar’s presumed interlocutors are the “civilized gentlemen” of Bengali society and that he does not blame women for moral lapses resulting from their callous confinement.

THE EVILS OF CHILD MARRIAGE

If they give away a daughter of eight in marriage, a mother and father win merit as if they had bestowed the Goddess Gauri herself; if they give away a daughter of nine, their reward is like that of one who has bestowed the earth; if they find a suitable groom for a daughter of ten, they win the pure realms of the other world. Such are the imaginary fruits promised by the legal treatises, mirages that entice our countrymen into practicing the custom of child marriage without any thought to its consequences.

Has it not heretofore occurred to anyone how much grievous harm this practice has caused? In their efforts to promote child marriage and to prohibit marriage among adolescents, the authors of the treatises have cleverly illustrated the awful punishments awaiting the unrighteous. Thus, if a young girl experiences her first menses while still a virgin in her father’s house, she becomes a source of shame for her father and mother alike. Not only will she cause seven generations of ancestors to fall into Hell, but the rest of society will scorn and ostracize her father and mother as impure for as long as they live. . . .

When a couple are married as children they have no chance to taste the sweet fruit of love for one another. Instead, at every step of the way the demands

of married life place obstacles in the way of mutual affection, while there is every chance that further misfortune will follow from the unpleasant challenges placed on a relationship by the having of children. Furthermore, a newly married boy and girl are eager to please one another; they will be careful to develop and display their ability at jokes, witticisms, eloquence, and the arts of love. In fact, they will be so concerned to master the necessary skills of such things that their education will be seriously compromised. And once they abandon learning—which is the very essence of life—they will be human beings in form alone; there will be no grounds for counting them as true human beings. . . .

O lord, how long must we wait before you rescue us from this peril? And when will that blessed day arrive? At least we are fortunate that now a movement has started to address this problem. . . . I have begun to write what I can on the subject of child marriage because I have weighed these several concerns in my heart. . . .

While the custom of educating women is practiced in this region, it remains the case that even at a young age the boys and girls of our region acquire important lessons from their mothers. In their youth, children are more devoted to their mothers than they are to their fathers or other elders. The delight experienced by a child who hears soft and loving words is not to be elicited by the edifying words of a teacher. This is why children are much less happy and content in the company of menfolk than they are around women. This being so, even after a child has been weaned, they should continue to savor the rich, ambrosial teachings that flow from their mother's heavenly lips. If so, they will easily develop a steadfast taste for learning while still young. The mother's teaching is implanted firmly in the child's heart and quickly yields its benefit; we could expect not even one hundredth the result from some other teacher. The Europeans are wise and civilized at a young age because they have recognized the capacity mothers have as teachers. We will not reap this benefit until we succeed in abolishing the law of child-marriage in this land. We are aware that some young gentlemen are educating their daughters like sons, but the marriage day arrives for these girls regardless of their education. And on that very day their studies come to an end. From then on they take up residence in another's house, under another's rule. There, following the will of their mother- and father-in-law, they learn the methods of house-cleaning, bed-making, cooking, serving, and other chores. The few letters that they learned in their father's place are entirely forgotten in their introduction to the earthen pot, frying pan, and ladle. Thus if the mothers and fathers of these young girls challenge this region's laws of marriage and delay marriage in favor of providing some introduction to learning, then after just a short period of education their daughters will gain the power of teaching their children. This would fulfill the fondest dream of their mothers and fathers. . . .

Can anyone overlook the grueling vows undertaken by our widows in accordance with the legal treatises and the insufferable pains they must endure—all

because in our country the marriage of widows is so forcefully prohibited? The widow's life is nothing but misery. . . . If, on her fast day, she should become thirsty or fall prey to some mortal illness, the heartless law forbids her to receive even a drop of water or medicine on the tip of her parched tongue. Just consider the dire straits faced by a young girl who has been required to marry as a child and who later loses her husband. . . . Who can describe the all-consuming sorrow visited upon a tender young girl who must take this arduous vow in childhood, an arduous vow that transforms her very body through the grueling observance of ascetic discipline (*brahmacarya*)? We have all seen hundreds of such unfortunate young girls for ourselves, fasting through the nights, hungry and thirsty, emaciated and pale, as good as dead. And yet not even the compassionate among us has the courage to defy the cruel laws of the treatises and customs of the land to show mercy on them in their pitiable condition. What's more, these unfortunate women have developed such firmness of character that even if they can see they are at the point of dying they will not allow even a drop of water to pass their lips. . . . What's more, with a little reflection, everyone will recognize that for a widow who lives in a respectable home there will be all sorts of anxiety lest she fall victim to sin. Through ignorance it sometimes happens that a widow forgets her duties as a chaste wife and wanders onto evil paths; fearing public condemnation she might even take to the most reprehensible practices, like abortion. In the end, all the sorrows faced by the young widow have their origin in the custom of child marriage. This being the case, it is utterly heartless and cruel to give away daughters in marriage while children. I therefore make this humble appeal to the civilized gentlemen of my country: let us all devote ourselves with single-mindedness and diligence to banishing from our land the cruel custom of child marriage.

[From "Balyavivaher Dosh," trans. B. Hatcher, *Critical Asian Studies* 35.3 (2003): 479, 480, 482, 483–484.]

It clearly appears, then, that the people of the Kali Yuga are unable to practice the Dharma of the past Yugas; and the question arises: what are those Dharmas which the people of the Kali Yuga are to observe? In the Dharma Sastra of Manu it is merely stated that there are different Dharmas for the different Yugas; but the Dharmas peculiar to the different Yugas have not been specified. Neither in the Dharma Sastras of Atri, Vishnu, Harita and others is mention made of these different Dharmas. . . . It is in the Parasara Sanhita only that there is an assignment of the Dharma peculiar to the different Yugas. . . . On observing how Parasara Sanhita opens there will not remain the shadow of a doubt that its sole object is to promulgate the Dharma of the Kali Yuga. . . .

Now, it should be enquired, what Dharmas have been enjoined in the Parasara Sanhita for widows? We find in the 4th chapter of this work the following passage [*the Sanskrit is quoted*]:

“On receiving no tidings of a husband, on his demise, on his turning an ascetic, on his being found impotent, or on his degradation—under any one of these five calamities, it is canonical for women to take another husband. That woman who, on the decease of her husband, observes the Brahmacharya (leads a life of austerities and privations) attains heaven after death. She who burns herself with her deceased husband resides in heaven for as many Kalas or thousands of years as there are hairs on the human body or thirty-five millions.”

Thus it appears that Parasara prescribes three rules for the conduct of a widow: marriage, the observance of the Brahmacharya, and burning with the deceased husband. Among these, the custom of con cremation has been abolished by order of the ruling authorities; only two ways, therefore, have now been left for the widows; they have the option of marrying or of observing the Brahmacharya. But in the Kali Yuga, it has become extremely difficult for widows to pass their lives in the observance of the Brahmacharya, and it is for this reason that the Philanthropic Parasara has, in the first instance, prescribed remarriage. Be that as it may, what I wish to be clearly understood is this—that as Parasara plainly prescribes marriage as one of the duties of women in the Kali Yuga under any one of the five above-enumerated calamities, the marriage of widows in the Kali Yuga is consonant to the Sastras.

[From Ishvarachandra Vidyasagara, *Marriage of Hindu Widows*,
with an introduction by Arabinda Podder, 2nd ed. (1855; Calcutta:
K. P. Bagchi, 1976), 3–5, 7–8. Slightly emended for grammar
by R. F. McDermott.]

NILAKANTHA GOREH: A TRADITIONAL PANDIT TAKES ON THE MISSIONARIES

Nilakantha Goreh (1825–1895) is an excellent example of the fact that not all Hindu intellectuals found Christianity appealing. Born to a Chitpavan Brahman family from Maharashtra who had settled in Banaras, as a young man Goreh was full of religious and intellectual scruples: he refused to attend the Benares Sanskrit College because he was afraid of coming into contact with European knowledge; and he changed his personal loyalty from Shiva, the family deity, to Vishnu, because he felt that the worship of the latter was older, better attested in the scriptures, and modeled by the great nondualist philosopher Shankara. Before he was even twenty he had decided that the Christian missionaries whom he encountered proselytizing in the streets and bazaars of the city were a threat, and he decided to engage and vanquish them with his pen.

An opportunity came in the form of a tract written by an East India Company employee, John Muir (1810–1882), who in his extra-official time was an avid Sanskritist and very committed to the spread of the Gospel. Muir’s *Mataparīkshā* [*Examination of Religions*]: *A Sketch of the Argument for Christianity and Hinduism* (Calcutta: Bishop’s

College Press, 1839) was styled as a conversation between a teacher and student, in which Sanskrit verses, as well as historical information being proposed and unearthed by contemporary Orientalist scholars, were quoted by the teacher in order to prove his allegations against Hinduism. The teacher criticized Hinduism for its lack of miracle-wielding founders, the contradictions internal to its scriptures, the fact the no one really understands the Vedas, even though they are mumbled by rote, the reprehensible behavior of the major deities (Brahmā, Vishnu, Krishna, and Shiva), the addiction to image worship, the lack of equality between men as authorized by the holy texts, and the facile understanding of sin, which to Hindus is easily washed off by a splash of Ganges water.

This text produced three apologetic responses, each by a traditional Hindu pandit who wrote to contradict claims made on behalf of the so-called Satya Dharma, or Religion of Truth, Christianity. Goreh was the third; his Sanskrit *Shāstratattvanirnāya* [*A Verdict on the Truth of the Scriptures*] (1844–1845) not only defends Hindu practice and ideology but criticizes Christianity for various beliefs that he finds foolish and lacking in intellectual depth: among them predestination, the claim that the merit of one man can save all others from condemnation, and the callous denial that animals have souls.

It is ironic and interesting, however, that four years after he wrote the *Shāstratattvanirnāya* Goreh did, in fact, convert. The catalyst was William Smith (1806–1875) of the British evangelical Church Missionary Society, who was one of the street missionaries of Banaras whom he had engaged so heatedly in his anti-Christian fervor. Baptized as “Nehemiah,” Goreh was eventually (1870) ordained in the Anglican Church, and it was he who was responsible for the conversion, in 1883, of Pandita Ramabai. In his later years, after 1867, he entered into a protracted dialogue with the Brahmo Samaj, and especially with the branch led by Keshab Chandra Sen, who was simultaneously evolving his own unique interpretation of Christianity. Goreh critiqued Sen for minimizing sin, for being too Westernized, and for not accepting Christianity wholeheartedly. But he shared Sen’s pride in the fact that Jesus was an “Asiatic,” not a European.

DOUBTS CONCERNING CHRISTIANITY

The extracts to follow come from a pamphlet authored during Goreh’s pre-conversion days, when he was fighting the missionaries. “Doubts Concerning Christianity” (1845) offers a concise synopsis of the arguments of *Shāstratattvanirnāya*.

First Doubt: According to Christianity none can be saved but those who believe in Christ, and yet scarcely anyone has heard of Christ! What? Has God created many nations and innumerable generations for Hell, and though he had provided the remedy by which they might have been saved, never sent it to them?

Second Doubt: According to the Gospel, Christ is your mediator, and through him . . . pardon of sin and every other blessing is to be obtained. What!

Is the sea of God's love and mercy dried up, that the blood and the water of Christ's death and intercession are required to replenish it? But you say, God is just, and therefore Christ died. I ask, is this justice that the innocent should suffer for the guilty, and the guilty escape? Again, where is the use of an atonement, as you state it? Repentance and amendment are what God requires.

Third Doubt: Christ and his Apostles, you say, performed many miracles. This I doubt. Such wonders one hears of everywhere, and learned men have decided that such tales are not worthy of credit. Moreover, wonderful works, which wise men amongst us have related and believed, you won't believe; why, then, should we believe yours?

Fourth Doubt: All religions according with the Ved teach that souls are eternal, and that the nature, or dispensation, of God is so essentially just, that from it, as from the *kulpbriksh* [a wishing tree located in Indra's *svarga*], every one receives fruit exactly according to his works. But according to Christianity, God, by a mere act of his will, creates souls; which is both improper and impossible. There are many souls walking disorderly, and are altogether unfortunate: would God knowingly and wilfully have created these? And yet you say, the infinitely wise God has created souls who he knew very well would eventually be miserable in Hell forever! On this supposition I do not ask merely, where is his wisdom gone, but what has become of his justice and his mercy too? . . .

Sixth Doubt: Christianity denies the transmigration of souls. This doctrine involves much injustice. True, for those who after death obtain salvation, it is well enough. But with regard to those who die in their sins, and are never to obtain birth again, the case is very different. Their punishment is not only useless, but it would prove God to be guilty of enmity, cruelty, and injustice.

The doctrine of the Ved and Shasters on this point is far more reasonable. According to them, whatever a soul suffers here is for the sins of a former birth. Thus, by a sensible punishment, they receive correction and instruction; and if they refuse nevertheless to reform, they will clearly be without excuse.

One word, before I conclude, as to what you object in regard to what are esteemed the evil deeds of the gods and incarnations—for instance, those of Krishna. Surely, you would not bind God as you bind yourself! What is sin and what is holiness, but just what God determines to be so? Listening to the story of the divine amusements, whether in Krishna's incarnation or those of others, is death to evil passion and every sinful desire in man. So that what the Christians say, that the only tendency of Krishna's doings is to increase sin, is all a calumny. If wicked people make these amusements an excuse for themselves committing sin, . . . theirs is the sin. God is blameless.

[From Richard Fox Young, *Resistant Hinduism: Sanskrit Sources on Anti-Christian Apologetics in Early Nineteenth-Century India* (Vienna: De Nobili Research Library, 1981), 104–105.]

RASSUNDARI DEVI: THE FIRST BENGALI AUTOBIOGRAPHER LOOKS BACK ON A RESTRICTED LIFE

In her autobiography, *Āmār Jīban* (My Life) (part 1, 1876; part 2, 1906)—the first autobiography to be written in the Bengali language, and a major publication event in its day—Rassundari Devi (b. 1810) adds a human dimension to the phenomenon of child marriage (discussed above by Ishvarchandra Vidyasagar). Married at the age of twelve to a stranger, a man living three days' travel away, she recounts the heartrending sorrow of being torn from her mother after the wedding, "like the sacrificial goat being dragged to the altar, the same hopeless situation, the same agonized screams." Although she credits her husband's family for being nice to her and frequently praises God for his kindness, she also describes the exhausting toil of housework, the labor involved in raising eleven children, and the stultifying strictures against women's education and freedom of movement. Her metaphors bespeak entrapment: she is a caged bird who will never be freed, a fish caught in a net, a slave sent to her in-laws' house. Is all this suffering and deprivation, she asks, due to the simple fact that she was born a woman?

LEARNING TO READ

Writing at a time when female education was becoming acceptable in Bengal, she exclaims over the good fortune of "women of today," giving them, however, a taste of what emotional and physical hardships she endured in order to learn to read and write, furtively, in the kitchen, over long periods, by watching her son at his lessons.

THE THIRD COMPOSITION

... The news made me very happy indeed. I would be married. There would be music, I would hear the women ululating. How exciting that would be! Yet I felt scared at the same time. I cannot express the apprehensions that came to my mind. Meanwhile the various things necessary for the ceremony began to arrive. Relatives and guests began pouring in. I was scared to death by all this. I did not talk to anyone and spent most of the time weeping. Everybody did their best to reassure me. They embraced me, but the unspoken agony in my mind did not lift.

Later on I was cheered up by the ornaments, the red wedding sari, and the wedding music. I forgot my earlier worries and went about laughing and watching the elaborate preparations. My happiness knew no bounds. When everything was over the next day, I heard people asking my mother, "Are they leaving today?" I thought they were referring to the guests. Then the music started. There was an air of festivity. The guests must be leaving now, I thought. It made me happy and I went about following my mother. Presently everybody assembled inside the house. Some looked happy, but others were in tears. That made me feel really frightened. Then my brother, aunts, uncles, and my mother all took me in their arms by turn as they burst into tears. Their tears made me so sad that I began to cry too. I knew mother was going to hand me over to the

other family. I tightened my hold on her and pleaded, "Don't give me over to them, Mother!" That made everybody present even more upset. They broke down and tried to say nice words to console me. My mother took me in her arms and said, "You are a good girl, you understand everything, don't you? God is with us, you needn't be afraid. You are going to come back to us in a few days' time. Every girl has to go to her in-laws' house. Nobody else cries like this. There is no reason to be so upset. Please calm down and talk to me." But I was trembling all over with fear. I was quite unable to speak. Somehow I managed to say through my tears: "Are you sure that God will go with me?" Mother promptly reassured me that he most certainly would. "He will be with you all the time, so stop crying now." But in spite of her soothing words my apprehensions kept growing and I could not check my tears.

With great effort they took me away from my mother. I still feel sad when I think of the state of mind I was in and the agony I was going through. As a matter of fact it is indeed a sad thing to leave one's parents, settle in some other place, and live under other people. A place where your parents are no longer your own. But such is the will of God, so it is praiseworthy.

I clung to whomever came to pick me up and went on weeping incessantly. Everyone, old and young, was moved to tears. Eventually they managed to put me into a palanquin, which was not the one intended for me. No sooner was I seated inside than the bearers started marching off. With none of my near ones close by I sank into a deep depression. Since there was no way out, I started praying through my tears: "Please be with me, God." If I am asked to describe my state of mind, I would say that it was very much like the sacrificial goat being dragged to the altar, the same hopeless situation, the same agonized screams. I could see none of my relatives near me. I was miserable, and in tears I kept calling for my mother. I also prayed with all my heart as Mother had told me to. If you ever feel afraid, think of God, she had said.

All these thoughts went through my mind as I sat weeping. Very soon I felt too parched to cry.

THE FIFTH COMPOSITION

... My first child was born when I was eighteen and the last when I was forty-one. God only knows what I had to go through during those twenty-three years. Nobody else had any idea either.

There were eight maidservants in the house, but all of them lived outside the household. There was nobody to do the household chores in the inner quarters. I was the only one. As was the custom, I had to do all the work and look after the children as well. I had to work right through the day and the night, without a moment's rest. Suffice it to say that I had no time to think about my own health. So much so that I often did not eat either of the two meals. There were days when the pressure of work did not let me even have one meal during the course of the day. ...

Merciful God! I am only an unfortunate girl. I hardly know you. I don't know what I would have done without you. If I had had a sickly body I couldn't possibly have raised my children. I would have been most miserable with a sick body. I thank you a hundred times. Friend of the poor! It is only through your good grace that I have come to know what it takes to bring up a child, what agony the mother has to go through. I never knew that a mother has to suffer so much for the sake of her children. People never realize these things unless they go through similar pressures. Now I know perfectly well the tortures a mother has to undergo because of her children. Every human being should know this. Most people do not have any knowledge about the matter.

I regret to say that I have not taken good care of my own mother, who was so affectionate. A mother is a very precious thing—it is my misfortune that I did not understand it. She suffered so much for my sake. But I was not of any use to her. She did not derive any benefit from me. She used to cry for me and wanted to have me over. But I am a virtual prisoner here. They never sent me to her because the household work here would suffer. I was allowed to go back to attend some family festival but had to return in a couple of days like a slave. About fifteen people accompanied me on the boat along with two senior men and two maidservants. I was allowed to visit my people only under certain conditions. I was allowed to go only on special occasions, not otherwise. When my mother lay on her deathbed she wanted very badly to see me. I have caused her sorrow, hateful sinner that I am. I tried my utmost, but could not go. It is my misfortune. It is a matter of no ordinary regret. Alas my God, why did you let me be born as a human being? It is indeed a very rare fortune to be born a human being. Birds and beasts are inferior beings. And to think of the sin I have committed even after being fortunate enough to be born a human. Why was I ever born a woman? Shame on my life! A mother is the most affectionate person in the world, the representative of God on earth—and I could not even be of any use to her. My grief knew no bounds. If I were a son I would have flown directly to my mother's bedside. But I am helpless. I am a caged bird.

THE SIXTH COMPOSITION

I was so immersed in the sea of housework that I was not conscious of what I was going through day and night. After some time the desire to learn how to read properly grew very strong in me. I was angry with myself for wanting to read books. Girls did not read. How could I? What a peculiar situation I had placed myself in. What was I to do? This was one of the bad aspects of the old system. The other aspects were not so bad. People used to despise women of learning. How unfortunate those women were, they said. They were no better than animals. But it is no use blaming others. Our fate is our own. In fact older women used to show a great deal of displeasure if they saw a piece of paper in the hands of a woman. So that ruled out my chances of getting any education.

But somehow I could not accept this. I was very keen to learn the alphabet. When I was a child I used to sit in the schoolroom and listen to the chanting of the students. Could I remember any of that? By and by I recalled the thirty letters with all their vowel combinations. I could recognize the letters, but was still not able to write them. What was I to do? Actually one cannot learn without a teacher. Besides, I was a woman, and a married one at that, and was not supposed to talk to anyone. If anyone spoke a harsh word to me I would die of shame. That was the fear that kept me from talking to anyone. My only hope was God and my constant prayer was, "Dear God, I can only learn to read and write if you teach me. Who else is there to be my teacher?" Days passed in this manner.

One day I dreamt that I was reading the Chaitanya Bhagavata. When I woke up I felt enthralled. I closed my eyes to go over the scene. It seemed that I was already in possession of something precious. My body and my mind swelled with satisfaction. It was so strange! I had never seen the book yet I had been reading it in my dream. For an illiterate person like me, it would have been absolutely impossible to read such a difficult book. Anyhow I was pleased that I was able to perform this impossible feat at least in a dream. My life was blessed! God had at last listened to my constant appeals and had given me the ability to read in my dream. Thank you, dear God. You have made me so happy. He had given me what I had wanted so much, and I was happy.

Our home contained several books. Perhaps the Chaitanya Bhagavata is one of them, I thought to myself. But what did it matter to me after all? An illiterate woman like me wouldn't even recognize the book. So I prayed to God again, saying, "You are the friend of the poor; allow me to recognize the book. You must let me have that book. You are the only one whom I can approach." That was how I prayed to God silently.

How strange are the ways of God and the effects of his kindness! He heard my prayers and set out to grant me my wish. My eldest son was then eight. I was working in the kitchen one day when my husband came in and said to him, "Bipin, I am leaving my Chaitanya Bhagavata here. Please bring it over when I ask you to." Saying that he put the book down there and went back to the outer house.

I listened from the kitchen. No words can express the delight I felt when I heard his words. I was filled with happiness and rushed to the spot to find the book there. Pleased with myself, I said to God, "You have granted my wish," and I picked the book up. In those days books were made differently. There were illustrated wooden frames to hold the sheets. Since I did not know how to read, I tried to remember the illustrations.

When the book was brought into the room I detached one sheet and hid it. But I was afraid lest it were found. That would be a disgrace. . . . Where should I keep it so that nobody would find it? But if they did, what would they say? Finally I decided to put it in some place where I would be present most of the time and nobody else was likely to go. The khori in the kitchen was the only hiding place

I could think of. . . . But I had no time to look at it. I kept the sheet in my left hand while I did the cooking and glanced at it through the sari, which was drawn over my face. But a mere glance was not enough, because I could not identify the letters.

I decided to steal one of the palm leaves on which my eldest son used to practice his handwriting. One look at the leaf, another at the sheet, a comparison with the letters I already knew, and, finally, a verification with the speech of others—that was the process I adopted for some time. Furtively I would take out the sheet and put it back promptly before anybody could see it.

Wasn't it a matter to be regretted, that I had to go through all this humiliation just because I was a woman? Shut up like a thief, even trying to learn was considered an offense. It is such a pleasure to see the women today enjoying so much freedom. These days parents of a single girl child take so much care to educate her. But we had to struggle so much just for that. The little that I have learned is only because God did me the favor. . . .

After a great deal of time and with great effort I somehow managed to stumble through the Chaitanya Bhagavata. Books were not printed in those days. The handwriting was difficult to decipher. Oh, the trouble I had to take to read. In spite of all that, I did not learn to write. One needs a lot of things if one is to write: paper, pen, ink, ink pot, and so on. You have to set everything before you. And I was a woman, the daughter-in-law of the family. I was not supposed to read or write. It was generally accepted as a grave offense. And if they saw me with all the writing paraphernalia, what would they say? I was always afraid of criticism. So I gave up the idea of writing and concentrated on reading. I never thought I would be able to read. It seemed an impossible task in my situation. The little that I have learned was possible because God guided me. I was deeply engrossed in whatever I could read and the idea of writing did not cross my mind.

[From "Amar Jiban" (My Life) in *Women Writing in India*, vol. 1: 600 B.C. to the Early Twentieth Century, ed. Susia Tharu and K. Lalita (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993), 192–193, 196, 198–202. Trans. E. Chatterjee.]

BIBI ASHRAF: A YOUNG MUSLIM GIRL STRUGGLES TO EDUCATE HERSELF

Ashrafunnisa Begum (1840–1903) was born into a family of Shia Sayyids living in a small rural community in Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh. She was eight when her mother died; since her father had moved to Gwalior to work as a lawyer, she was brought up thereafter by her loving grandmother and a rather unloving aunt and uncle. Soon after birth she was engaged to a second cousin nine years her senior; they were married when she was nineteen. Her husband was a professor of Arabic at the Government College in Lahore, but he died young in 1870, leaving Bibi Ashraf with two young daughters. Within a few months her father died as well. She supported her children with a teaching job, and eventually became the head teacher of a middle school in

Lahore. She never remarried; widow remarriage was uncommon among the Muslim elite of South Asia during the nineteenth century. Her life was, by her own account, grief-stricken, for in addition to all the deaths she had suffered prior to 1870, her two daughters predeceased her, one leaving a baby boy who also did not survive long.

LEARNING TO WRITE

Although Bibi Ashraf came from what might be considered a progressive family in the mid-nineteenth century—the men of the house left home to develop their own professional careers elsewhere—even as late as 1850 it was not considered proper for women to learn to write. The following excerpts from her account, detailing how she taught herself to read and write, first appeared in Urdu in a women's magazine, in March 1899.

It had long been customary in my family to teach the girls to read—but to teach them how to write, that was strictly forbidden. The girls were taught only to vocalize the Arabic of the Qur'an and to read a bit of Urdu so that they could gain some knowledge of their faith and learn the rules of prayer and fasting. . . .

Eventually, as time went by, all the girls except for me began to study with their mothers; my mother, as my ill luck would have it, fell ill. I was at the time about seven or eight and my brother, may God preserve him, was just six months old. My mother was not so much worried about her illness as she was concerning my lack of education, but there was nothing she could do. She was, however, the daughter of a *marsiya-xwan* and herself knew how to recite a *marsiya*. Even as she lay sick, she taught me from memory a number of religious, benedictory poems [*mujrē salām*]. Woe, a thousand times woe, that life failed her and she died while we were still very young. . . .

I cannot describe the pain and grief I felt when my mother died. I thought of her night and day. I would wander through the house and break into tears at all the places where my mother used to sit or sleep or say her prayers. If a *majlis* was held I would cry all day long, for I would remember how my late mother used to participate. I was then too young to shed tears over the misfortunes of the martyred Imam and his blessed household. I did not think that anyone could be more afflicted with adversity than I was. . . .

I was [. . .] dying to learn to read Urdu, but I could not find any woman who would teach me. Why was I so eager to read Urdu? In our house, during the forty day observance of Muharram, separate *majālis* for men and women used to be held every day. In addition, a *majlis* was held every Thursday in fulfillment of someone or other's vow. That was the reason I was so keen to read Urdu. All the ladies in my family knew Urdu quite well. When they visited other homes—on some happy or sad occasion—or when other ladies came similarly to visit us, my female relatives would read aloud from books on matters of faith and religious observances. Listening to them I came to know by heart a little about such matters, just as one does with stories, but that did not at all lessen my keenness to be myself blessed with the gift of reading.

Once I went to each and every lady in the family and begged her to teach me just one or two words every day. I said, "Teach me and I would be your slave for life." But not one of them was the slightest moved by my pleading. Each gave the same reply: "Girl, have you gone crazy? You better find some cure for this madness. First of all, what will you do with it even if you learned to read? Secondly, why do you think it is all that easy to teach someone to read? It's not an easy task. It demands much hard work. I don't have so much energy to waste on you."

I lost all hope when I heard that response, and began to cry. In fact, I felt so hurt I screamed. That only made them more angry. . . .

Later one night, [. . .] it occurred to me that if I had a *salām* or a *mujrā* I could myself figure out the words and begin to read. What was so difficult about that! After all, I already knew the letters of the alphabet. What did I care if no one wanted to teach me! That idea so much raised my courage and hope that the very next morning I sent a maid to all my friends with this message: "I need some *salām* and some *mujrā*. Please let me borrow some from you. I shall have them copied and returned." May God ever keep them happy, for all of them sent me some.

But who was there to copy them for me? That had been merely an excuse. I used the same excuse again and said to my grandmother, "Please get me some paper. I shall ask Uncle to copy these poems for me." She immediately sent someone to the market and got me some paper. Now the question was, how should I make copies, and where should I hide myself to do that? For it would have been disastrous for me if anyone was even to suspect me of writing. I had no mother to cover up for me, and writing was strictly forbidden to girls. How was then I to reach my goal and also keep it secret? My aunt was already furious with me. She used to call me nasty names for reading the *Qur'ān* so much; she would say, "Thank God, this girl hasn't learned anything else, otherwise she would have time for nothing at all." God knows what she would have said if she were to see me writing.

After thinking about these matters at length I decided that at noon, when everyone was resting, I would make some ink with the blacking from the griddle [*tāwa*] and start copying. Believe me, that is exactly what I did. I got hold of some blacking from the kitchen, the clay lid of one of the water pots, and a fistful of twigs from the broom. Thus equipped I went up to the roof, pretending that I was going to rest there, and excitedly began to copy out words. I cannot tell you how happy I felt that that moment. Childhood is so innocent! No sooner had I copied a few words than I felt I had already won the battle. . . .

However, I could not understand what I was writing. I didn't have the sense to know that one cannot learn to read without a teacher. I believed that just as other skills could be learned merely by watching and imitating others so would be the case with reading. As a result, I spent a great deal of time and effort for nothing. When no headway was made my crying spells started again. Then God gave me a teacher.

[She describes the help she got from the son of her grandmother's sister, a boy who taught her a little—three pages of a book in his school bag—before he was sent away to study in Delhi.]

Once again I was in despair. I went around begging everyone to teach me. No one did. Finally I started reading that book on my own. I would look at new words, and if I recognized any familiar letters I would put them together. Slowly, in this piecemeal manner, I would figure out whole words and read on—half right, half wrong. I also memorized whatever I read. In this way I read through the entire book. I then used the same method on other books and eventually began to read Urdu fairly well. Then I turned to all those several *mujrē* and *salām* that I had earlier copied down without understanding a word. You can't imagine how happy I was the day I read those copies. I don't think there has been a happier day since. As I read my own handwriting I felt doubly encouraged and that much more confident. [. . .] No one yet, however, came to know my secret. . . .

After my uncle left and joined my father in Gwalior, the fact that I could write came to be known by the ladies at home. How long could I hide it? In any case, it was my uncle I had mainly been scared of, for he strongly disapproved of women's learning to write. When he was gone, I began to practice writing openly. No one objected. On the contrary, my skill at writing was viewed as a novelty by my relatives, and also by others. Whenever any woman had the need to send a letter, she would come to me to get it written. On my part, I gladly transcribed—any which way I could—whatever was dictated to me. During that process, women would disclose to me their innermost secrets; they would tell me things that they would never speak of in front of anyone. And their letters brought replies. I could, however, understand only a tenth part of what I was told. . . .

When the mutiny in Delhi occurred it put an end to all exchanges of letters. Consequently, for nearly eighteen months, we received no letter from my father, neither could we write to him. All of us were greatly anxious about each other. Finally when some peace returned, my father sent a man to get our news. When that man was ready to return to Gwalior, my grandmother gave him a letter that she had her brother write for her. I gave him a letter too, a letter that I had written myself, containing all that I had seen or heard of the mutiny. . . .

My father was absolutely delighted when he read my letter. . . . Then I wrote my father the whole story—how I had learned to write on account of my own intense desire. He rewarded me by sending me an expensive comforter and several suits of clothes, having had them sewn for me in Gwalior. But my uncle, may God grant him peace, was very angry to learn that I could write. He wrote me a chiding letter and never quite forgave me so long as he lived.

[From C. M. Naim, "How Bibi Ashraf Learned to Read and Write,"
Annual of Urdu Studies 6 (1987): 102, 104, 105–110.]

MIRZA ASADULLAH KHAN GHALIB: DO NOT WORSHIP THE DEAD

Mirza Asadullah Khan “Ghalib” (1796–1869) was one of the two greatest poets of the classical Urdu ghazal genre of lyric poetry. He prided himself even more, however, on his Persian poetry and prose, and on his aristocratic lineage; in general, he sought to make the British behave like the Mughals—especially when it came to patronizing poets like him.

REFUSING SIR SAYYID AHMAD KHAN

When Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, who had a great antiquarian interest in Mughal literature and architecture, and who wanted to affirm and establish the Indo-Muslim heritage both in British eyes and in the eyes of Indo-Muslims themselves, asked Ghalib to write a preface for his new edition of Abul Fazl’s famous “Institutes of Akbar,” Ghalib firmly rejected the idea as being backward-looking. He had traveled to Calcutta, and valued such British innovations as grid-planned streets, newspapers, and the postal service. So he replied to Sir Sayyid with the following Persian poem.

Good news my friends, this ancient book’s door
Is now open, because of the Sayyid’s grace and fortune,

The eye began to see, the arm found strength
That which was wrapped in ancient clothes, now put on a new dress.

And this idea of his, to establish its text and edit the *Ain*
Puts to shame his exalted capability and potential,

He put his heart to a task and pleased himself
And made himself an auspicious, free servant.

One who isn’t capable of admiring his quality
Would no doubt praise him for this task,

For such a task, of which this book is the basis
Only an hypocrite can offer praise.

I, who am the enemy of pretence
And have a sense of my own truthfulness,

If I don’t give him praise for this task
It’s proper that I find occasion to praise.

I have nothing to say to the perverse
None know what I know of arts and letters,

In the whole world, this merchandise has no buyer.
What profit could my Master hope from it?

It should be said, it's an excellent inventory
So what's there to see that's worth seeing?

And if you talk with me of Laws and Rules
Open your eyes, and in this ancient halting-place

Look at the Sahibs of England.
Look at the style and practice of these,

See what Laws and Rules they have made for all to see
What none ever saw, they have produced.

Science and skills grew at the hands of these skilled ones
Their efforts overtook the efforts of the forebears.

This is the people that owns the right to Laws and Rules
None knows to rule a land better than they,

Justice and Wisdom they've made as one
They have given hundreds of laws to India.

The fire that one brought out of stone
How well these skilled ones bring out from straw!

What a spell have they struck on water
That a vapour drives the boat in water!

Sometimes the vapour takes the boat down the sea
Sometimes the vapour brings down the sky to the plains.

Vapour makes the sky-wheel go round and round
Vapour is now like bullocks, or horses.

Vapour makes the ship speed
Making wind and wave redundant.

Their instruments make music without the bow
They make words fly high like birds. . . .

Go to London, for in that shining garden
The city is bright in the night, without candles. . . .

Worshipping the Dead is not an auspicious thing
And wouldn't you too think that it's no more than just words?

The Rule of silence pleases my heart, Ghalib
You spoke well, doubtless; not speaking is well too.

Here in this world your creed is to worship all the Prophet's children,
Go past praising, your Law asks you to pray:

For Sayyid Ahmad Khan-e Arif Jang
Who is made up entirely of wisdom and splendour

Let there be from God all that he might wish for
Let an auspicious star lead all his affairs.

[Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib, "Preface" to Sayyid Ahmad Khan's
edition of the *A'in-e Akbari* (1855–56). *Kulliyat-e Ghalib Farsi*,
vol. 1, ed. Sayyid Murtaza Husain Fazil Lakhnawi (Lahore:
Majlis Taraqqi-e Adab, 1967), 314–318. Trans. Shamsur Rahman Faruqi.]

THE INDIAN REBELLION OF 1857: DELIBERATIONS, FATALITIES, AND CONSEQUENCES

On May 10, 1857, in the town of Meerut in North India, sepoys of the East India Company's army mutinied against their British officers because of rumors that they were soon to be required to bite off cartridges greased with cow or pork fat in order to load their new Enfield rifles. Such rumors might have been quelled—or the problem behind them perceived and remedied—in an earlier period in the history of the East India Company army, when there was one English officer to every three Indian soldiers, and when the levels of the army hierarchy interacted more closely. By 1857, however, the expansionist ambitions of the British, as particularly evidenced by the policies of Lord Dalhousie, Governor-General from 1848 to 1856, had angered and alarmed Indians from many echelons of society: Dalhousie pushed forward with the mechanization of the empire, introducing the first railway lines in 1850, establishing the first telegraph system in 1851, and nationalizing the regional postal operations in 1854. While these innovations created the technological base for an evolving modern South Asian nation, in the mid-nineteenth century they also provided the means of increased British control over land, made English presence felt more universally, and led



India in 1857

many Indians to fear that modernization would come at the expense of their own traditions. In 1848 Dalhousie also started seizing lands, ignoring prior treaties and using the rules of “lapse” and laziness or incompetence—according to which territories without blood successors (adoption did not count) or with disolute rulers could be annexed. Between 1848 and 1856, Dalhousie annexed the estates of deceased princes of Satara (1848), Udaipur (1852), Jhansi (1853), Tanjore (1853), Nagpur (1854), and Oudh (1856) through such methods. Other reasons for Indian frustration with and anxiety over British interventions include the effects of missionary activity, the institutional replacement of Persian with English, and the increased economic drain and impoverishment of the home market, due to cheap British imports that forced artisans, textile workers, and weavers out of work. The sepoy’s action, therefore, was merely the boiling over of an increasingly simmering cauldron of discontent.

Like wildfire, other mutinies and civilian rebellions erupted across north and central India, with the major hostilities confined to present-day Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, northern Madhya Pradesh, and the area around Delhi, to which many of the sepoy’s rushed in an effort to restore the aged Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah, to power. The Company, caught off balance by this first serious threat to their power, managed to contain the Rebellion only after more than a year. What occurred in 1857 has been described variously by historians writing in different times and with different political biases. For the British, of course, it was a mutiny, since the rebellious East India Company army sepoy’s turned against their superior officers. Since V. D. Savarkar’s influential work appeared in 1909 (discussed in chapter 7), however, the conflict has often been called the “first war of independence,” foreshadowing what was to come in 1947. Other historians, attempting to interpret outside either colonial or nationalist frames, have referred to the event as an uprising, a revolt, or a rebellion.

AN ATTEMPTED MUGHAL RESTORATION: THE AZAMGARH PROCLAMATION

In the summer of 1857, with much of north central India in rebellion against British rule, the Azamgarh Proclamation was allegedly (though in fact its authenticity is doubtful) issued by a grandson of the emperor Bahadur Shah. The proclamation was quite secular in tone, and the various appeals made in order to rally support commingled promises of reward for those who would join to root out the British with threats of punishment for those who would not, and appended a list of grievances against the British. Indeed, many princes and landholders from western and northern India took advantage of the temporary period of chaos and anarchy provided by the sepoy’s to avenge their own experiences of overtaxation, economic despoliation, and Britain’s “doctrine of lapse,” which affected princely states without an “acceptable” natural heir. The Azamgarh Proclamation was the closest thing to a manifesto for independence from the British that the Rebellion ever produced, and it expressed the contemporary

conviction that Hindus could prosper under a Mughal ruler. A few weeks after the proclamation was issued, the British recaptured Delhi and Bahadur Shah was taken prisoner.

It is well known to all that in this age the people of Hindostan, both Hindoos and Mohammedans, are being ruined under the tyranny and oppression of the infidel and treacherous English. It is therefore the bounden duty of those who have any sort of connexion with any of the Mohammedan royal families, and are considered the pastors and masters of the people, to stake their lives and property for the well-being of the public. With the view of effecting this general good, several princes belonging to the royal family of Delhi have dispersed themselves in the different parts of India, Iran, Turan [Turkestan], and Afghanistan, and have been long since taking measures to compass their favourite end; and it is to accomplish this charitable object that one of the aforesaid princes has, at the head of an army of Afghanistan, etc., made his appearance in India; and I, who am the grandson of Abul Muzuffer Sarajuddin Bahadur Shah Ghazee, king of India, having in the course of circuit come here to extirpate the infidels residing in the eastern part of the country, and to liberate and protect the poor helpless people now groaning under their iron rule, have, by the aid of the Mahjdeens [mujāhidīn, “fighters for Islam”] . . . erected the standard of Mohammed, and persuaded the orthodox Hindoos who had been subject to my ancestors, and have been and are still accessories in the destruction of the English, to raise the standard of Mahavir.

Several of the Hindoo and Mussulman chiefs, who have long since quitted their homes for the preservation of their religion, and have been trying their best to root out the English in India, have presented themselves to me, and taken part in the reigning Indian crusade, and it is more than probable that I shall very shortly receive succours from the west. Therefore, for the information of the public, the present Ishtahar [proclamation], consisting of several sections, is put in circulation, and it is the imperative duty of all to take it into their careful consideration, and abide by it. Parties anxious to participate in the common cause, but having no means to provide for themselves, shall receive their daily subsistence from me; and be it known to all, that the ancient works, both of the Hindoos and the Mohammedans, the writings of the miracle-workers, and the calculations of the astrologers, pundits, and rammals [fortune-tellers], all agree in asserting that the English will no longer have any footing in India or elsewhere. . . .

Section I.—Regarding Zemindars [landholders].—It is evident that the British government, in making zemindary settlements, have imposed exorbitant jummas [taxes], and have disgraced and ruined several zemindars, by putting up their estates to public auction for arrears of rent, insomuch that on the institution of a suit by a common ryot [cultivator], a maidservant, or a slave, the respectable zemindars are summoned into court, arrested, put in gaol, and disgraced. In

litigations regarding zemindaries, the immense value of stamps, and other unnecessary expenses of the civil courts, which are pregnant with all sorts of crooked dealings, and the practice of allowing a case to hang on for years, are all calculated to impoverish the litigants. Besides this, the coffers of the zemindars are annually taxed with subscriptions for schools, hospitals, roads, etc. Such extortions will have no manner of existence in the Badshahi government; but, on the contrary, the jummas will be light, the dignity and honour of the zemindars safe, and every zemindar will have absolute rule in his own zemindary. The zemindary disputes will be summarily decided according to the Shurrah [*Shar'ā*] and the Shasters [*śāstras*], without any expense; and zemindars who will assist in the present war with their men and money, shall be excused for ever from paying half the revenue. . . .

Section II.—Regarding Merchants.—It is plain that the infidel and treacherous British government have monopolised the trade of all the fine and valuable merchandise, such as indigo, cloth, and other articles of shipping, leaving only the trade of trifles to the people, and even in this they are not without their share of the profits, which they secure by means of customs and stamp fees, etc., in money suits, so that the people have merely a trade in name. . . . When the Badshahi government is established, all these aforesaid fraudulent practices shall be dispensed with, and the trade of every article, without exception, both by land and water, shall be open to the native merchants of India, who will have the benefit of the government steam-vessels and steam carriages for the conveyance of the merchandise gratis; and merchants having no capital of their own shall be assisted from the public treasury. . . .

Section III.—Regarding Public Servants.—It is not a secret thing, that under the British government, natives employed in the civil and military services, have little respect, low pay, and no manner of influence; and all the posts of dignity and emolument in both the departments, are exclusively bestowed on Englishmen. . . . But under the Badshahi government, . . . the posts . . . which the English enjoy at present . . . will be given to the natives . . . together with jagheers [landed estates], khilluts [ceremonial dress], inams [tax-free lands], and influence. Natives, whether Hindoos or Mohammedans, who fall fighting against the English, are sure to go to heaven; and those killed fighting for the English, will, doubtless, go to hell. Therefore, all the natives in the British service ought to be alive to their religion and interest, and, abjuring their loyalty to the English, side with the Badshahi government and obtain salaries of 200 or 300 rupees per month for the present, and be entitled to high posts in future. . . .

Section IV.—Regarding Artisans.—It is evident that the Europeans, by the introduction of English articles into India, have thrown the weavers, the cotton-dressers, the carpenters, the blacksmiths, and the shoemakers, &c., out of employ, and have engrossed their occupations, so that every description of native artisan has been reduced to beggary. But under the Badshahi government the native

artisans will exclusively be employed in the services of the kings, the rajahs, and the rich; and this will no doubt insure their prosperity. Therefore the artisans ought to renounce the English services, and assist the Majahdeens . . . engaged in the war, and thus be entitled both to secular and eternal happiness.

Section V.—Regarding Pundits, Fakirs, and other learned persons.—The pundits and fakirs being the guardians of the Hindoo and Mohammedan religions respectively, and the Europeans being the enemies of both religions, and as at present a war is raging against the English on account of religion, the pundits and fakirs are bound to present themselves to me, and take their share in this holy war, otherwise they will stand condemned according to the tenor of the Shurrah and the Shasters; but if they come, they will, when the Badshahi government is well established, receive rent-free lands.

Lastly, be it known to all, that whoever, out of the above-named classes, shall, after the circulation of this Ishtahar, still cling to the British government, all his estates shall be confiscated, and his property plundered, and he himself, with his whole family, shall be imprisoned, and ultimately put to death.

[From Charles Ball, *The History of the Indian Mutiny, giving a detailed account of the Sepoy Insurrection in India and a Concise History of the Great Military Events which have tended to Consolidate British Empire in Hindostan* (1858–1859; New Delhi: Master Publishers, 1981), 2:630–632.]

THE RANI OF JHANSI: AN EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT

The rulers of many princely states chose to side with the British during the Rebellion of 1857. The Begum of Bhopal, for example, who took the reins of state after her father died, renounced purdah, and worked until her death in 1868 to “improve” Bhopal along British lines, personally rode with her army to aid the British in 1857, for which she and her state were liberally rewarded. The Rani of Jhansi, by contrast, ultimately led her people in support of the sepoys, and for this she lost her life—and attained a place of honor in popular Indian lore.

The memoirs of Vishnubhat Godse are one of the few surviving accounts of the 1857 Rebellion that do not derive from the British. Godse came from a Chitpavan Brahman family near Bombay, and spent his life as a traditional family priest, with important familial and patronage connections to the Maratha chiefs in North India, in particular those at Bithur, Gwalior, and Jhansi. On a yearlong trip from Maharashtra to North India, starting in 1857, he happened to witness several incidents of the Rebellion, one of which, involving the Rani of Jhansi, to whom he refers as Baisaheb, we reproduce here. Godse came to Jhansi in early 1858, and was trapped in the fort when the city was besieged and sacked by the British army commanded by Hugh Rose. In 1884 he wrote down his memories in the form of a travelogue that was sponsored by one of his landowner patrons but purposely withheld from publication until 1907,

after the author's death. The text has been known to Maharashtrian historians since at least the late nineteenth century, and has generally been taken as a straightforward description of events as they actually occurred. V. D. Savarkar (see chapter 7) took inspiration from this account when writing *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*, which was published in 1909 in England and then immediately banned. The references to women and children in this and the following selections remind us that no one, on either side, was spared violence: English women were hacked to death by the sepoys; Indian women and children were burned alive in villages fired by the advancing British armies. Moreover, these sources reveal that honor was often couched in gendered terms, with the violation of women being equated with the despoliation of home. Women were reported to have preferred death to capture by the enemy, and men—especially British men—became savages in vengeance for the death of their women.

The Baisaheb was devoted to physical fitness. Rising at first light she would go to the wrestler's pillar and exercise for 48 minutes, then ride on horseback or exercise her elephant, then in the fourth ghatika of the day (72nd to 96th minute, literally) she ate and drank milk; after that she bathed. Seven or eight cauldrons of water were needed for her bath. Even after she became independent the Bai never did anything improper. It is true that cultivating the body turns one away from immoral desires. In the third prahara she would sample any gifts that might have arrived and then sit in the open court (darbar). On Fridays and Tuesdays she would assemble all her retinue and proceed in state to the shrine of Shri Mahalakshmi.

As war was imminent, preparations were being made for it. Lalu Bakshi was appointed to prepare fresh stocks of ammunition, and soldiers from the [former British] regiments were being recruited for service. News was daily received from Kalpi and other places. . . .

[*The Raja of Banpur intercepted letters from Jhansi being sent to the English at Gwalior and brought them to the Rani in the middle of the night.*] He then said that it would be best to collect the army, evacuate Jhansi and march to Kalpi where the Peshwa was. "My reason is that these letters are not written by any ordinary townsman. They are written by a commander or official; he will be impossible to trace and the effort will cause consternation. Finally we shall be trapped here."

The Baisaheb responded "Up till now, the decision was to fight here; so no special connection has been made with the Peshwa, and furthermore you have to remember whose daughter-in-law and whose wife I am. It does not seem good to me to flee in fear of my life to that male gathering at Kalpi. Instead, I shall assemble all the officers, question them about these letters and make them swear an oath and do whatever is necessary."

The Raja replied "Do not fall into this confusion. Whoever is plotting treason will not confess. It does not seem good to confide in such a place. In future

you will have cause to remember my words. Let it be. What is fated to happen even Brahmadeva cannot avert. I shall take my family out of this fortress.”

[*The Rani summoned all the officers, new and old.*] They all lit torches and began to assemble. I went up to the eastern tower of the fort to enjoy the spectacle. Torches burned all the way from the streets of the city to the big gateway of the fort. All the officers were coming up to the fort according to their status. The Raja of Banpur was seated before the Baisaheb. The Minister was standing before her with his sash on. The Baisaheb had a sacred stone lingam and bel leaves and turmeric powder in a silver stand brought in by Brahmans and placed in the midst of the gathering. The Raja of Banpur brought out the letters and read them to the assembly. The Baisaheb then spoke, saying these letters show that there is treason in our camp. Some have suggested that we take all our forces and equipment and go and join the Peshwa. They say “Let whatever happens there happen, let us not remain here.” Upon this Lalu Bakshi and Dulaji Singh the chief and others replied, “this state is an old one and the fortress strong. To abandon all these and seek shelter with the Peshwa as soon as danger threatens does not seem right to us. We have said what we had to say, let everyone hear us and do what should be done. If anyone has the least inclination to intrigue let him be reassured of safety if he confesses it and takes an oath for the future. Then no suspicion will remain.”

The Minister (Divan) then spoke, saying it is difficult to confess in front of this multitude. But let whoever has done this consider that for the sake of personal advantage, he is consigning everyone else to death and destruction. So let him abandon this course and take an oath of loyalty, and everyone’s suspicions will be at rest. This letter was not written by an ordinary townsman, but by an officer. All the officers are present here.” Everyone remained silent. The Baisaheb then said “I am a widow woman, that too of mature years and you must consider whose daughter-in-law I am. At this time to go to seek protection from that company of men in Kalpi—it is better that something be done here. The Peshwa is our patron and we must send emissaries to ask his help in repelling the English attack. This arrangement can be entrusted to the Divan. At present, if anyone has any strategem in mind, let him give it up and join in taking an oath on the sacred emblem of Shiva with the sacred leaf and powder in his hand.”

When Baisaheb said this all the old and new officers rose and took the oath with their hands on the silver stand previously placed in the assembly, and returned to their places. At that time, Dulaji Singh also took the oath before the Bai and returned to his place. Then everyone’s mind became free of suspicion and pan-supari was distributed, rosewater and perfume sprinkled and the assembly broke up. The Raja of Banpur took his family and treasures, bade the Bai farewell and returned to his camp beside the Vetravati (Betwa) river. . . .

When the British advanced to attack the city, Dulaji Singh who commanded four thousand men deliberately misloaded his cannons with bags of grain instead of shot. The people around him panicked and abandoned the walls. The

English began to mount the city wall. Perceiving this the Bai mustered her old Vilayati [Muslim soldiers] and came down from the citadel with 1500 men. They all had drawn swords in hand and they confronted a thousand English. The Bai was there sword in hand too. The two sides fought briefly with swords—then the English in fear of their lives drew back into the city and opened fire from there. An old officer of the Vilayatis took the Bai by the hand and said that if they remained there they would die uselessly as the English fired from cover. It was better to withdraw into the fortress and consider what to do next. This was done and the gates were closed. The English began entering the city and shooting down every man that they saw and setting fire to houses. They first commenced burning and killing in the Halvaipura quarter. They sought out males from the age of five to the age of eighty and killed them. At this time soldiers of the Bai's garrison rushed to find barbers to cut off their moustaches and side-locks, applied ash and sandal-paste and pretended to be harmless devotees. Those who could not find a barber hacked off their beards with their own swords and dressed as ascetic fakirs. Thousands of white soldiers entered the city from all sides and commenced massacring people. The terror in the city at this time was immeasurable. The screaming and crying was endless. At that time there was a small garden belonging to Bhide in the middle of the city. People fled into it from all directions. Up to twenty thousand people were gathered there. The English soldiers came, whereupon all the people lay prone on the ground and begged for mercy, saying that they were ordinary folk and none of them was a soldier. The English had pity on them, posted a guard at the gates and went elsewhere. They began entering houses and killing men they encountered; sometimes they caught and tortured them, demanding rupees, gold, pearls or other valuables. If they found these, then they sometimes let them go. Sometimes they dragged them about with their own waistcloths tied about their necks to force them to show where valuables had been buried; if they were found the men might be released, only to be killed by the next party of English that came by. But they did not kill women. However young women of good families feared that they would be defiled, and so, as soon as the English entered their houses they went to the well at the back and drowned themselves. Sometimes when they were killing men, their womenfolk sought to protect them and were killed by gunshot. The men would still be taken and killed. But women were not deliberately killed. If soldiers came to a house where there only women they stood at a distance and made them surrender their ornaments, searched the house and left. Horses, camels, cows, dogs and cats wandered the streets howling from thirst. . . .

Looking down from the fort battlements, the city seemed in desperate condition. At dusk the Bai permitted everyone to escape from the fort if they wished. Brahmans, men and women servants, etc., all went out at this time. I also left the fort and sought the house of Mandavgane. . . .

[*The Rani fled the city.*] The Bai was seated on a white horse which was worth 2500 rupees. She was in male attire, trousers etc. She wore stitched boots and

chain-mail armor. She did not take a single bit of money. Only a silver cup was tied to her sash. She had her weapons strapped to her waist, and a sword in a scabbard. She had her twelve year-old adopted son strapped to her back with a silk cloth. She uttered the words "Jai Shankar" and the whole troop left the fort by the northern gate. The English advanced to intercept them. The Bai fired from her carbine and pressed on. She broke though but most of her Vilayati escort was killed. The survivors scattered. Only a slave-woman who was good rider, and one horseman remained with her as she took the road to Kalpi. The English gave up the chase in the darkness and returned to their camp. . . .

[Having fled the fort, Godse sought out his friend Mandavgane, who told him what had transpired in the town. They discussed what they should do to save their lives. The latter proposed hiding at night in the hollow space between the walls of a derelict mansion across the street, where they would not be visible to anybody.] At dusk after evening prayer and food, I climbed up to the roof to survey the city. Such was the destruction that I trembled in every limb at the sight. I was filled with dread. The whole city had become a land of corpses. Animals were howling from hunger and thirst, as were a few destitutes roaming the street. Beyond the Halvaipura, the city was ablaze. Huge tongues of flame blown by the wind leapt from house to house. Such a dreadful fate overtook Jhansi as no other town had suffered. . . .

[Intercepted by two white soldiers] I lay prone on the ground and began speaking in the Hindustani language. "Saheb, I come from the Thana district under the Bombay government. I came here on pilgrimage. I have a son and since I am a mendicant I came to know the owner of this house while on the road. He brought me here in the hope of charity. Fifteen days have passed since I came here." The soldiers judged from my language that I was not from those parts. They began to demand money from me and searched me and my bedding. I had brought 250 rupees from the fort, which was tied up in the bedding. The coins clinked when the soldiers threw it down, and the soldiers took the money and left.

I then went to hide in the space between the walls. The space filled up with men and young women. Four persons squeezed in where there was place for three. Terror filled the city. Hundreds of gunshots began to be heard. There was not the slightest breeze where I sat. It was summertime. By midnight I was seized with a terrible thirst, an incomparable thirst. I felt as though I would die. Our group had decided that when there was no firing people would go back to the house and drink from the well, using a jug on a string that had been secreted there. But I lacked the courage. And gunshots could be heard in that direction. I suffered the thirst. Finally, considering that there had been no shots for some time, I went to well, drew water and drank. I had hardly done so when I heard noises close by, and dropping the jug fled back to the hiding place, and quickly squeezed into a space already occupied by two young women. The young woman within faced west and I was facing east. The space was so confined

that we were pressed breast to breast. There was only her blouse between us, and it was soaked with perspiration. We were like this for an hour or so. At that time I was thirty or thirty-three years old, and the woman was eighteen or twenty. But we were in such fear of our lives that neither of us became aroused. After an hour so I left that place and went to my original spot.

In that crisis no pollution rules were observed. Many men were killed on the second day. Seeing the soldiers coming, people had hidden in the fodder stores; these were set alight and they burned to death. Others leapt into the ponds or lakes. But the English soldiers sat down by the ponds and shot them as they put their heads above water. Others hid in the fields but were hunted out and killed. . . . Thus for three days the killing continued.

[Vishnubhat Godse, *Majha Pravas: 1857 cya Bandaci Hakikat*, ed. Datto Vaman Potdar (Pune: Venus Prakashan, 1974), 66–67. Trans. S. Guha.]

BAHADUR SHAH: THE LAST DAYS OF THE LAST MUGHAL EMPEROR

The soldiers who had mutinied at Meerut in 1857 marched to Delhi and, joined by sympathizers, made a force of sixty thousand armed men in the city. Jivanlal, an official of the court, wrote a detailed narrative of the last days of the Mughals. Whatever was argued later at his trial, it is almost certain that the emperor, Bahadur Shah, a talented poet who wrote under the nom-de-plume “Zafar,” had not been in collusion with the sepoys before they stormed into Delhi and turned to him for shelter, maintenance, and leadership. Moreover, at first, and then often in subsequent weeks, he expressed his disapproval of their riotous activities in his city. But either out of necessity, given the sepoys’ presence in Delhi, or out of longing for the restoration of his dynastic power, he eventually acquiesced to the mutineers’ desire to use him as a figurehead, and on May 11 the elderly emperor allegedly sent them a welcoming poem.

May all the enemies of the Faith be killed to-day;
The Firinghis be destroyed, root and branch!
Celebrate the festival of Eed Kurban by great slaughter;
Put our enemies to the edge of the sword—spare not!

[“Jivanlal’s Narrative,” trans. C. T. Metcalfe, *Two Native Narratives of the Mutiny in Delhi* (London: Constable, 1898), 177.]

Bahadur Shah’s position, despite his symbolic value as a rallying point, was weak. An eighty-two-year-old mystic poet, Sufi, and calligrapher, the emperor was not eager to unite the sepoys and their allies against the British. Conditions in Delhi—for everyone, but especially for the local population—worsened from repeated plundering on the part of the army; by mid-August ordinary people were starving. Bahadur Shah

was unable even to stop the sepoys from converting his audience hall into an ammunition store, harassing the women in his zenana, and ruining his gardens. Increasingly depressed, sensing that the rebellion would lead to the destruction of Delhi and the end of his dynasty, the elderly emperor nevertheless had bouts of energy, often when trying to protect people or institutions in Delhi, but also when he hoped for help.

In the following letter, he appealed, ultimately unsuccessfully, to the neighboring rajas and chieftains for aid in routing the British. At his trial, he denied having written the letter, suggesting—quite plausibly—that it had been composed by his son, Mirza Mughal, or by someone else who had access to the royal seal.

Consider yourself honoured and learned. That I have been made thoroughly acquainted, by your petition, with all the particulars of the slaughter throughout your territory of the accursed unbelieving English. You are worthy of a hundred commendations. . . . Of the small number of infidels, who in jeopardy of their lives had betaken themselves to their entrenchments on the Ridge, considering them a refuge and a protection, many have been killed and the very few holding on in their precarious existence are equally doomed. . . . You are directed to use all diligence to come to the royal presence, bringing your tributary contributions of money with you, and to slay the accursed unbelieving English and all other enemies wherever you may find them on your way.

[Letter to the Gulab Singh, the ruler of Jammu, 22 August 1857, in
“Evidence taken before the court appointed for the trial of the king of Delhi,”
House of Commons, Parliamentary Papers, 1859, vol. 18.]

The Delhi that Bahadur Shah’s court had cultivated, prior to 1857, represented a composite Hindu-Muslim, Indo-Islamic civilization: there was nothing odd at the time in a largely Hindu sepoy army rushing to Delhi to rescue, shore up, and receive aid from a Mughal empire that still conferred political legitimacy. Even in his straitened circumstances during the summer of 1857, Zafar tried to prevent the rebellious sepoys from despoiling the prosperous Hindu merchants in Delhi. He urged the two groups to cooperate in the struggle against the British.

[*The King issued a proclamation by beat of drum that the Hindus and Muslims must not quarrel. But*] Moulvie Mahommed Said demanded an audience, and represented to the King that the standard of Holy War had been erected for the purpose of inflaming the minds of the Mahommedans against the Hindus. The King answered that such a jehād was quite impossible, and such an idea an act of extreme folly, for the majority of the Purbeah rebel soldiers were Hindus. Moreover, such an act would create internecine war, and the result would be deplorable. It was fitting that sympathy should exist among all classes. It was pointed out that the Hindus were leaning towards an alliance with the English and had

no sympathy with the Mahommedans, and were already holding themselves apart. A deputation of Hindu officers arrived to complain of the war against the Hindus being preached. The King replied: "The holy War is against the English; I have forbidden it against the Hindus."

[*"Jiwanlal's Narrative,"* 98.]

The British, however, were strongly entrenched on the Ridge, the hill north of the city, and Bahadur Shah expressed his awareness of the hopelessness of his situation to his officers.

"The Royal Treasury is empty . . ." General Bukht Khan came to the Durbar and complained that the soldiers no longer obeyed his orders. The King replied, "Tell them, then, to leave the city." . . . "It is quite clear to me that the English will ultimately recapture this city, and will kill me."

[*"Jiwanlal's Narrative,"* 179–180.]

GHALIB'S DELHI DIARY: STORM AND TURMOIL

Many people, Indians and foreigners, have left accounts of events in Delhi as the city was occupied by troops who had rebelled against the British, and then as it was reoccupied and sacked by the British. Among those who wrote of the fate of the city, which had been a cultural as well as political power, was the great Urdu poet Ghalib, who had been patronized by Zafar and was a friend of many of the British officials. His poetic hyperbole is corroborated by responsible British accounts. His account is in the form of a diary. Ghalib stresses, as few accounts do, that there was guilt on both sides. His emphasis on "loyalty" as a cardinal virtue, even to foreign rulers, is a distinctive element in the Indo-Islamic culture of the time, and must be taken seriously in order to understand the history of the period.

It may be worth mentioning that during this storm and turmoil the nature of calamity is different in every lane and bazaar. The manner of killing and looting by the soldiers is not uniform but varies, and whether a soldier shows kindness or unkindness depends on his individual nature.

Orders have been given to spare the lives of those who do not resist these assaults. But whosoever does resist them will lose his life along with his possessions. It is believed that those who were killed were ones who did not show obedience (to the British). . . .

O you who commend justice and you lovers of truth... think of what we have done. Although everyone knows that disloyalty is a sin... we raised our swords against our masters and we killed helpless women and infants playing in their cradles. The British rose up in revenge against such atrocity. . . . Most of the citizens had fled the city but some, caught between hope and despair, are living inside the walls... The hearts of the helpless inhabitants of the city, and those

of the grief-stricken people outside, are filled with sorrow, and they are afraid of mass slaughter. . . .

The speed of my pen is like the speed of a half-dead ant, and it is difficult to put all of this on paper for the benefit of my readers. Nothing more can be said of the fate of the Mughal princes than that some were shot and devoured by the dragon of death; and some were hung by their necks with ropes, . . . and the aged and fragile Mughal emperor is under trial by the court.

[Ghalib, *Dastanbūy: A Diary of the Indian Revolt of 1857*
by Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib, trans. K. A. Faruqi
(New York: Asia Publishing House, 1970), 49, 50, 57–58.]

BAHADUR SHAH'S DEFENSE

The British recaptured Delhi in September 1857, and the city, already repeatedly plundered by the sepoys, was subjected to further horrific plundering, along with the murder of civilians by British soldiers, with the approval of their officers. All of this was, then as now, standard treatment of a defeated people.

The emperor was put on trial; he was charged—somewhat strangely—as a British subject, with disloyalty and treason against the British queen. As he awaited trial, British men and women came to peer at the feeble old man who, as one woman put it, had once been ruler of one of the world's most magnificent cities and a great empire but was now confined to a small, squalid room. During the trial, the emperor, used to being hailed as “Lord of the Universe,” was addressed by the judges as *tum*, the pronoun used for children and servants. Not surprisingly, he refused to speak during the trial, but the advocate-general read his defense, a selection from which is given here in the official translation. He claimed that he had been forced to side with the soldiers from Meerut who had rebelled against the British. He showed a touching concern for the safety of his wife, Zinat Mahal, although she described him at this time to William Russell, the correspondent of the London *Times*, as “a troublesome, nasty, cross old fellow.”

Witnesses were found who contradicted the emperor's version of events. Some of them were spies for the British, some were anxious to prove their loyalty to the British in order to save their own lives, but in any case the verdict of guilty was a foregone conclusion. He was exiled to Rangoon, Burma, where he died in 1862. The sons and grandson whom he identified as responsible for some of his alleged crimes were summarily executed without trial. Later, twenty-one princes of the royal family were hanged.

The real facts are as follows: I had no intelligence on the subject previously to the day of the outbreak. About eight o'clock in the morning, the mutinous troopers suddenly arrived and set up a noisy clamour under the palace windows, saying that they had come from Meerut after killing all the English there; and stating, as their reason for having done so, that they had been required to bite with their teeth, cartridges greased with the fat of oxen and swine, in open violation of the

caste of both Hindus and Mussulmans. . . . Not long after this the mutinous soldiery rushed into the hall of special audience . . . and the hall of devotion, surrounding me completely, and placing sentries on all sides. I asked them what their object was, and begged them to go away. In return they told me to remain a quiet spectator, saying they had staked their lives and would now do all that might be in their power. Fearing that I should be killed, I kept quiet and went to my own apartments. Near evening, those traitors brought, as prisoners, some European men and women . . . and resolved on killing them. . . . Though I again did all in my power to reason with the rebellious soldiery, they would not heed me and carried out their purpose of slaying [some European men and women]. I gave no orders for this slaughter. Mirza Moghul, Mirza Khair Sultan [his sons], and Mirza Abul-Bakr [his grandson], who had leagued with the soldiery, may have made use of my name. . . . Whenever the soldiers or [my sons] or [grandson] brought a petition, they invariably came accompanied by officers of the army, and brought the order they desired, written on a separate piece of paper, and compelled me to transcribe it with my own hand. . . . Matters went so far in this way that they used to say, so that I might hear them, that those who would not attend to their wishes would be made to repent their conduct, and for fear of them I could say nothing. . . .

What power in any way did I possess? . . . The officers of the army went so far as to require that I should make over the queen Zinat Mahal to them that they might keep her prisoner, saying she maintained friendly relations with the English. . . . [The soldiers] plundered not only many individuals, but several entire streets, plundering, robbing, killing. . . . I was helpless, and constrained by my fears, I did whatever they required. . . . They, one day, went to the house of Queen Zinat Mahal, intending to plunder it. . . . If I had been in league with them, how would these things have occurred? In addition to all this, it is worthy of consideration that no man demands the wife of the poorest man, saying, "Give her to me, I will make her a prisoner." . . .

In all the above, which I have caused to be written from my own dictation . . . God knows, and is my witness, that I have written only what is strictly true, and the whole of what I can remember.

[“Translation of the written defense put in by Bahadur Shah,”
in “Evidence taken before the court appointed for the trial of
the king of Delhi,” 9 March 1858, in *House of Commons,
Parliamentary Papers*, 1859, vol. 18.]

QUEEN VICTORIA’S PROCLAMATION, NOVEMBER 1, 1858

Although the Rebellion failed, British resumption of power came at a terrific cost to both sides—in life, property, resources, and good will. The brutality of British vengeance, slaughter, and summary executions galled too few Britons at the time, but all

this did alert the British government to the inadvisability of allowing the East India Company to remain in active control of India. Hence on November 1, 1858, Queen Victoria made a historic proclamation, read out in as many Indian villages as possible, in which she declared that thereafter India would be governed by and in the name of the British monarch through a secretary of state. The governor-general was given the title of viceroy, or the monarch's representative; later, in 1877, Queen Victoria herself took the title "Empress of India," assuming the direct government of more than one hundred million Indians.

In a letter to Lord Derby, whom she asked to draft the actual proclamation, she requested that he communicate to her Indian subjects her promise of generosity, benevolence, and equality with all other subjects of the British Crown. In fact, general amnesty was announced as official policy, and the Queen pledged noninterference in matters of custom and religion and universal access to government service. The 24,000-man military force formerly belonging to the Company was incorporated into the British Army. The effect of the proclamation and the policies it promulgated was to favor the princes and landowners and hence to create a class of Indians loyal to the state; this "divide and rule" strategy proved effective in containing political discontent until the 1920s.

And we, reposing especial trust and confidence in the loyalty, ability, and judgment of our right trusty and well-beloved cousin and councillor, Charles John Viscount Canning, do hereby constitute and appoint him, the said Viscount Canning, to be our first Viceroy and Governor-General in and over our said territories, and to administer the government thereof in our name, and generally to act in our name and on our behalf, subject to such orders and regulations as he shall, from time to time, receive from us through one of our Principal Secretaries of State.

And we do hereby confirm in their several offices, civil and military, all persons now employed in the service of the Honourable East India Company, subject to our future pleasure, and to such laws and regulations as may hereafter be enacted.

We hereby announce to the native Princes of India that all treaties and engagements made with them by or under the authority of the Honourable East India Company are by us accepted, and will be scrupulously maintained, and we look for the like observance on their part.

We desire no extension of our present territorial possessions; and, while we will permit no aggression upon our dominions or our rights to be attempted with impunity, we shall sanction no encroachment on those of others. We shall respect the rights, dignity and honour of native Princes as our own; and we desire that they, as well as our own subjects, should enjoy that prosperity and that social advancement which can only be secured by internal peace and good government.

We hold ourselves bound to the natives of our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to all our other subjects, and those obligations, by the blessing of Almighty God, we shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil.

Firmly relying ourselves on the truth of Christianity, and acknowledging with gratitude the solace of religion, we disclaim alike the right and the desire to impose our convictions on any of our subjects. We declare it to be our royal will and pleasure that none be in anywise favoured, none molested or disquieted, by reason of their religious faith or observances, but that all shall alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the law; and we do strictly charge and enjoin all those who may be in authority under us that they abstain from all interference with the religious belief or worship of any of our subjects on pain of our highest displeasure.

And it is our further will that, so far as may be, our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified, by their education, ability, and integrity, duly to discharge.

We know, and respect, the feelings of attachment with which the natives of India regard the lands inherited by them from their ancestors, and we desire to protect them in all rights connected therewith, subject to the equitable demands of the State; and we will that generally, in framing and administering the law, due regard be paid to the ancient rights, usages, and customs of India. . . .

Our clemency will be extended to all offenders, save and except those who have been, or shall be, convicted of having directly taken part in the murder of British subjects. With regard to such the demands of justice forbid the exercise of mercy. . . .

When, by the blessing of Providence, internal tranquillity shall be restored, it is our earnest desire to stimulate the peaceful industry of India, to promote works of public utility and improvement, and to administer its government for the benefit of all our subjects resident therein. In their prosperity will be our strength; in their contentment our security, and in their gratitude our best reward. And may the God of all power grant to us, and to those in authority under us, strength to carry out these our wishes for the good of our people.

[From *The Evolution of India and Pakistan, 1858 to 1947: Select Documents*, ed. C. H. Philips (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 10–11.]

SIR SAYYID AHMAD KHAN ON THE CAUSES OF THE MUTINY

The career of Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817–1898) parallels in many ways that of Ram-mohan Roy. Both men were born into families of the high social rank, and both were educated in the Persian and Arabic learning required of entrants into the service of the Mughal Empire—well after that empire had been replaced by another. Both came to know and trust British officials and to appreciate the advanced knowledge and new form of government they brought to India. Both men rejected the Christian

doctrines being preached by missionaries, and made their own independent studies of the Christian scriptures. Both men searched for the central messages at the core of the religions of their ancestors, then sought to purge those religions of superstitions and medieval accretions, reinterpreting them so as to give their ancient meanings new vitality in the present. Both men edited periodicals, enriched with their writings the languages of their regions, and founded schools to make Western learning available to young people. (Sayyid Ahmad far outdid Rammohan in the amount of time and money he devoted to educational work.) Both men occasionally took stands critical of their rulers; both traveled to England to learn from, and offer advice to, its inhabitants; and both suffered bitter attacks from their coreligionists. In spite of the fact that neither one has had a noticeable impact on normative Muslim or Hindu religious practice, each by the twentieth century was being hailed as the founding father of his community's "modern" worldview. The religious ideas they were trying to defend and revitalize, however, and the geographic and sociopolitical contexts in which they operated, were quite different.

Sayyid Ahmad as a boy might have seen Rammohan in his customary Persian-style gown, shawl, and turban, presenting himself to the powerless Mughal emperor before setting off for London as His Majesty's ambassador; Sayyid Ahmad's family was attached to the Delhi court, his mother's father having twice served the emperor as his prime minister. This grandfather was also on good terms with the British, having been principal of the Calcutta Madrasa (school of Islamic learning) and an attaché with an embassy sent to the king of Persia by the East India Company. His example and personal influence (for his grandson grew up in his house) prepared young Sayyid Ahmad for a distinguished career of dual allegiance to India's Muslims and to their British rulers. Through his mother's brother, a subjudge in the East India Company's service, he obtained a clerkship in the judicial branch and did so well that he rose to be a subjudge himself within a few years.

The great shock of Sayyid Ahmad's life, which changed him from an observer to an active worker in defense of Muslims and of Islam in India, was the 1857 outbreak of military mutinies and civil strife in northern India. His immediate response was to save the lives of the British families of the district in which he was stationed as subjudge and then to try to keep the peace until the Company's forces arrived. But he failed in peace-keeping because of fighting between Hindu and Muslim factions.

In 1858, after the rebels had largely been defeated, Sir Sayyid penned a remarkable document in which he surveyed what he felt to be the likely reasons for Indian discontent with Company rule. Fearing that making such assessments publicly available would appear to be seditious in the atmosphere of the time, he wrote his comments in Urdu (he never learned enough English to write confidently in it) and circulated them only to a few select British officers of the East India Company. After criticizing the British for their insensitivity to their subjects' opinions, he recommended that a few Indians be appointed to the governor-general's legislative council, a practice that was initiated in 1861, with Sir Sayyid himself holding such an appointment from 1878

to 1883. But what worried him most in the next decade were indications that the British were placing the blame for the mutinies and rebellions on the Muslims, and that in consequence his already disadvantaged community would be rendered even more helpless than before.

The non-admission of a native as a member into the Legislative Council was the original cause of the out-break; . . . the importance of such an admission discussed.

Most men, I believe, agree in thinking that it is highly conducive to the welfare and prosperity of Government: indeed is essential to its stability, that the people should have a voice in its Councils. It is from the voice of the people only that Government can learn whether its projects are likely to be well received. The voice of the people can alone check errors in the bud, and warn us of the dangers before they burst upon and destroy us.

A needle may dam the gushing rivulet. An elephant must turn aside from the swollen torrent. This voice however can never be heard, and this security never acquired, unless the people are allowed a share in the consultation of Government. The men who have ruled India should never have forgotten that they were here in the position of foreigners, that they differed from the natives in religion, in customs, in habits of life and thought. The security of a Government, it will be remembered, is founded on its careful observance of their rights and privileges.

Look back at the pages of History, the record of the experience of the past, and you will not fail to be struck with the differences and distinctions that have existed between the manners, the opinions, and customs of the various races of men: differences which have been acquired by no written rule, or prescribed by any printed form. They are in every instance the inheritance of the peculiar race. It is to these differences of thought and customs that the laws must be adapted, for they cannot be adapted to the laws. In their due observance lies the welfare and security of Government. From the beginning of things, to disregard these has been to disregard the nature of men, and neglect of them has ever been the cause of universal discontent. Can we forget the confusion that ensued on the acceptance of the Dewannee by the British Government in the year 1760, a confusion brought about by the ignorance then prevailing? If one wishes to recall those times, he can read of them in Marshman's History. Who, on the contrary, does not remember the prosperity of Bengal when under the rule of Lord Hastings? I attribute it to the knowledge of its peculiarities and the acquaintance with the Vernacular which obtained in those days.

To form a Parliament from the natives of India is of course out of the question. It is not only impossible, but useless. There is no reason however why the natives of this country should be excluded from the Legislative Council, and here it is that you come upon the one great root of all this evil. Here is the origin of all the troubles that have befallen Hindustan. From causes connected with this matter sprang all the evil that has lately happened.

I do not say that Government has made no attempt to acquaint itself with the characteristics and economy of the country. I am well aware that serious efforts have been made. The Regulations of Government, the Circulars of the Board of Revenue, and Mr. Thomason's Directions to Revenue Officers are sufficient proof of this. But I do say that Government has not succeeded in acquainting itself with the daily habits, the modes of thought and of life, the likes, and dislikes, and the prejudices of the people. Our Government never knew what troubles each succeeding sun might bring with it to its subjects, or what sorrow might fall upon them with the night. Yet day by day troubles and anxieties were increasing upon them. Secret causes of complaint were rankling in their breasts. Little by little a cloud was gathering strength, which finally burst over us in all its violence.

The non-admission of such a member proved a hindrance to the development of the good feeling of the Indian subject towards the Government and of their good intention towards it; on the contrary, contrary effects were produced.

The evils which resulted to India from the non-admission of natives into the Legislative Council of India were various. . . . The greatest mischief lay in this, that the people misunderstood the views and the intentions of Government. They misapprehended every act, and whatever law was passed was misconstrued by men who had no share in the framing of it, and hence no means of judging of its spirit. At length the Hindustanees fell into the habit of thinking that all the laws were passed with a view to degrade and ruin them, and to deprive them and their fellows of their religion. Such acts as were repugnant to native customs and character, whether in themselves good or bad, increased this suspicion. At last came the time when all men looked upon the English Government as slow poison, a rope of sand, a treacherous flame of fire. They learned to think that if today they escaped from the hands of Government, tomorrow they would fall into them; or that even if they escaped on the morrow, the third day would see their ruin. There was no man to reason with them, no one to point out to them the absurdity of such ideas.

When the governors and the governed occupy relatively such a position as this, what hope is there of loyalty or of good-will? Granted that the intentions of Government were excellent, there was no man who could convince the people of it; no one was at hand to correct the errors which they had adopted. And why? Because there was not one of their own number among the members of the Legislative Council. Had there been, these evils that had happened to us, would have been averted. The more one thinks the matter over, the more one is convinced that here we have the one great cause which was the origin of all smaller causes of dissatisfaction. . . .

I do not wish to enter here into the question as to how the ignorant and uneducated natives of Hindustan could be allowed a share in the deliberations of the Legislative Council; or as to how they should be selected to form an assembly

like the English Parliament. These are the knotty points. All I wish to prove here is that such a step is not only advisable, but absolutely necessary, and that the disturbances are due to the neglect of such a measure. As regards the details of the question, I have elsewhere discussed them, and those who wish to enter into it can read what I have said.

The outbreak of rebellion proceeded from the following five causes.

This mistake of the Government then made itself felt in every matter connected with Hindustan. All causes of rebellion, however various, can be traced to this one. And if we look at these various causes separately and distinctly we shall, I think, find that they may be classed under five heads.

1. Ignorance on the part of the people: by which I mean misapprehension of the intentions of Government.
2. The passing of such laws and regulations and forms of procedure as jarred with the established custom and practice of Hindustan, and the introduction of such as were in themselves objectionable.
3. Ignorance on the part of the Government of the conditions of the people; of their modes of thought and of life; and of the grievances through which their hearts were becoming estranged.
4. The neglect on the part of our rulers of such points as were essential to the good government of Hindustan.
5. The bad management, and disaffection, of the army.

[*Causes of the Indian Revolt; Three Essays by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan*, ed. Salim al-Din Quraishi (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel, 1997), Sir Sayyid's preface, 61–63, 64, 65–66, as slightly edited by F. W. Pritchett.]

CAN MUSLIMS LIVE IN A CHRISTIAN STATE? ULEMA WHO SPEAK FOR THE BRITISH IN 1871

As seen in the excerpt from Shah Abd ul-Aziz near the end of chapter 1, a few Muslim scholars and religious leaders claimed that because religious freedom was no longer possible under British rule, India should be considered Dār ul-harb. Other ulema denied this interpretation, arguing that the British had not shown themselves to be enemies of Islam. Probably with British persuasion, ulema in Mecca and North India concluded that India was still a land of Islam, despite being ruled by Christians. This and Aziz's opposite ruling are only "opinions," based on the authors' readings of Islamic law and history. All of them should be read against the views of Muslim leaders noted elsewhere, such as Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan in this chapter and Muhammad Iqbal and Muhammad Ali Jinnah in chapter 7. No one in this latter group, however, was regarded as one of the ulema.

*SIR WILLIAM WILSON HUNTER: DECISIONS OF
ULEMA IN MECCA, LUCKNOW, AND RAMPUR*

Sir William Wilson Hunter (1840–1900) was a British civil servant, historian, statistician, and compiler, who from 1862 to 1887 oversaw a number of important publications, including works on the local traditions and records of Bengal, Orissa, and Assam, and a comprehensive statistical survey and imperial gazette of British India, the first edition of which was released in 1881 and which greatly facilitated the carrying out of the 1882 census. He also presided over the Commission on Indian Education, and in 1886 was elected vice-chancellor of Calcutta University. In his influential book interpreting the Rebellion of 1857, *The Indian Musalmans: Are They Bound in Conscience to Rebel Against the Queen?*, Hunter insisted that North India was covered by treasonable networks of mosques and schools, where men of “keen intelligence and ample fortune” have embarked on plots to overthrow the British. “While the more fanatical of the Musalmans have thus engaged in overt sedition, the whole Muhammadan community has been deliberating on their obligation to rebel.”⁵ The appendixes to his own book, in which he quotes ulema approving of British rule, apparently did not quell his fear of the dangers from seditious Muslims, and his reading of the political situation was accepted not only by many of the British, but also, perhaps more importantly, by many Hindus, becoming a factor in the anti-Muslim sentiment of Hindu nationalism.

Appendix I: Decision of the Mecca Law Doctors
(*The Heads of the three Great Musalman Sects*)

QUESTION.

“What is your opinion (may your greatness continue for ever) on this question: Whether the country of Hindustan, the Rulers of which are Christians, and who do not interfere with all the injunctions of Islam, such as the ordinary daily Prayers, the Prayers of the two P’s, etc., but do authorize departure from a few of the injunctions of Islam, such as the permission to inherit the property of his Muhammadan ancestor to one who changes his religion (being that of his ancestors), and becomes a Christian, is Dar-ul-Islam or not? Answer the above, for which God will reward you.”

ANSWER NO. I.

“All praises are due to the Almighty, who is the Lord of all the Creation!
O Almighty, increase my knowledge!

As long as even some of the peculiar observances of Islam prevail in it, it is Dar-ul-Islam.

The Almighty is Omniscient, Pure, and High!

This is the Order passed by one who hopes for the secret favour of the Almighty, who praises God, and prays for blessings and peace on his Prophet.

(Signed) Jamal Ibn-i-Abdullah Shaikh Umar-ul-Hanafi, the present Mufti of Mecca (the Honoured). May God favour him and his father.”

ANSWER NO. II.

“All praises are due to God, who is One; and may the blessings of God be showered upon our Chief, Muhammad, and upon his descendants and companions, and upon the followers of his Faith!

O God! I require guidance from Thee in righteousness.

Yes! As long as even some of the peculiar observances of Islam prevail in it, it is Dar-ul-Islam.

The Almighty is Omniscient, Pure, and High!

This is written by one who hopes for salvation from the God of mercy. May God forgive him, and his parents and preceptors, and brothers and friends, and all Muhammadans.

(Signed) Ahmad Bin Zaini Dahlan, Mufti of the Shafi Sect of Mecca (the Protected).”

ANSWER NO. III.

“All praises are due to God, who is One! O! Almighty! increase my knowledge!

It is written in the Commentary of Dasoki that a Country of Islam does not become Dar-ul-Harb as soon as it passes into the hands of the Infidels, but only when all or most of the injunctions of Islam disappear therefrom.

God is Omniscient! May the blessings of God be showered upon our Chief, Muhammad, and on his descendants and companions.

(Signed) Written by Husain Bin Ibrahim, Mufti of the Maliki Sect of Mecca (the Illustrious).”

Appendix II: The Decision of the Law Doctors of Northern India.

Translation of the Istifta or Question, Put by Sayyid Amir Husain,
Personal Assistant to the Commissioner of Bhagalpur.

What is your Decision, O men of learning and expounders of the law of Islam, in the following?—

Whether a Jihad is lawful in India, a country formerly held by a Muhammadan ruler, and now held under the sway of a Christian Government, where the said Christian Ruler does in no way interfere with his Muhammadan subjects in the Rites prescribed by their Religion, such as Praying, Fasting, Pilgrimage, Zakat, Friday Prayer, and Jama’at, and gives them fullest protection and liberty in the above respects in the same way as a Muhammadan Ruler would do, and where the Muhammadan subjects have no strength and means to fight

with their rulers; on the contrary, there is every chance of the war, if waged, ending with a defeat, and thereby causing an indignity to Islam.

Please answer, quoting your authority.

Fatwah dated the 17th Rabeeoossanee, 1287 H., corresponding with the 17th July 1870.

The Musalmans here are protected by Christians, and there is no Jihad in a country where protection is afforded, as the absence of protection and liberty between Musalmans and Infidels is essential in a religious war, and that condition does not exist here. Besides, it is necessary that there should be a probability of victory to Musalmans and glory to Islam. If there be no such probability, the Jihad is unlawful.

Here the Maulavis quote Arabic passages from Manhajul Ghaffar and the Fatawa-i-Alamgiri, supporting the above Decision.

Seals of Moulavi Ali Muhammad, of Lucknow;
Maulavi Abdul Hai, of Lucknow;
Maulavi Fazlullah, of Lucknow;
Muhammad Naim, of Lucknow;
Moulavi Rahmatullah, of Lucknow;
Moulavi Kutab-ud-din, of Dehli [*sic*];
Maulavi and Mufti Sadullah, of Lucknow;
Maulavi Lutfullah, of Rampur;
Maulavi Alumali, of Rampur.

[Appendixes from William W. Hunter, *The Indian Musalmans:
Are They Bound in Conscience to Rebel Against the Queen?*
(London: Trubner, 1871), 213–215.]



Chapter 3

THE LATER NINETEENTH CENTURY

LEADERS OF REFORM AND REVIVAL

This chapter focuses on the forty years between the Rebellion of 1857 and the time when the Indian National Congress, founded in 1885, truly began to make an impact on Indian political life. During this period, organizations and individuals committed to social and religious reform became vocal and active throughout India, but especially in the Presidencies (administrative units of the territories under the sovereignty of the British crown), where British power and influence were strongest. Vital concerns included the appropriate response to Christian teaching and to the figure of Jesus; the compatibility of rational thinking with religious faith; the ideal behavior of, and toward, women; and, for Hindus, the appropriateness of image worship and of the institution of caste. Although one finds the seeds of anti-European, anti-British feeling—especially in the language of spiritual battle in certain of Swami Vivekananda's speeches—by and large this period is one of confidence in British rule among the Anglicized elites, and attention to the challenges to Hindu and Muslim tradition by Christian religious ideas and modern Western rationalist and utilitarian thought. Half the authors included in this chapter wrote in English; at least half were fluent in English, and many spent time in England with a view to bringing back knowledge for the benefit of India. Several felt that East and West had significant resources to offer each other.

The most important reformist institutions in this period were Rammohan Roy's Brahmo Samaj, which under the subsequent leadership of Debendranath

Tagore and Keshab Chandra Sen remained into the 1880s in eastern India the focus of efforts to “purify” Hinduism and recapture a golden age; the Prarthana Samaj in the Poona/Bombay area, founded in 1867 by a circle of social reformers including Mahadev Govind Ranade; Swami Dayanand Sarasvati’s Arya Samaj, established in 1875, also in Bombay; and the various educational and social service institutions initiated from the 1860s to the 1880s by Sayyid Ahmad Khan in Aligarh, Jotirao Phule in Poona, and Ramabai Sarasvati in Bombay and Ahmedabad. Although in the south the main reformist movements—the anti-Brahman and anti-*devadāsī* movements—did not gain momentum until after 1900, during our period in Madras the Russian Madame Blavatsky and the American Colonel Olcott founded the Theosophical Society (1875), which held reincarnation, karma, and other Hindu or Buddhist conceptions as central doctrines and which harked back to what was seen as a once-golden period of Indian religious history.

The degree to which elements of Christian teaching could or should be incorporated into a reformed Indian religious tradition was debated widely—though, interestingly, not nearly as much among Muslims as among Hindus. There were a few important converts to Christianity, like Michael Madhusudan Datta, Krishna Mohan Banerjee, and Lal Behari De in Bengal, the Sathianandan family in South India, and the Sorabjis and Pandita Ramabai Sarasvati in western India, although it must be noted in Ramabai’s case that her approach to Christianity was decidedly nondenominational. Most Hindus—such as Keshab Chandra Sen, the mystic saint Ramakrishna, and his disciple Swami Vivekananda—were either very open to the example or person of Jesus Christ, even while being put off by the attitudes of Christian missionaries, or, like Swami Dayanand, scornful of Christian teaching. Dayanand in fact was one of the early critics of the Brahmo Samaj, for what he saw as its Christocentric and hence, he alleged, anti-nationalist leanings.

An attraction to rational thought and attempts to make it compatible with religious belief were also common to this period, as is borne out in autobiographical accounts of agonized soul-searching: Debendranath Tagore wonders about faith, reason, and the rightness of his refusal to participate in “idolatrous” rites; Swami Vivekananda feels called to preach Ramakrishna’s message to the world but is held back by the demands of his indigent family; Swami Dayanand cannot accept the Shaiva faith of his father once he sees a mouse crawling over a Shiva *linga*; and in his search for a rational Islam, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan encounters opposition from various sections of the Muslim community.

The “woman question”—partly generated by official British and missionary critiques of the so-called backward nature of Hindu and Muslim society—surfaces repeatedly in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Ranade enunciates the vision of religious reform groups, as they sought to end repressive practices based supposedly on scriptural dicta, such as infant marriage and the non-re-marriage of widows. Ramabai Sarasvati and Tarabai Shinde provide firsthand

accounts of the conditions of Indian women—conditions that Ramabai terms “not much better than that of animals in hell”; D. K. Karve and his wife, Anandibai Karve, recount what couples who practiced widow remarriage had to endure in contemporary society; and Amir Ali, while praising the Prophet for his farsighted treatment of women in sixth-century Arabia, challenges his co-religionists to follow the Prophet in his compassionate flexibility and sensitivity to context. But social critique is only half the story in the pre-nationalist period, for both Muslim and Hindu authors fill a popular demand by composing manuals for women that describe the “proper behavior” for the virtuous wife; here we include examples from Ashraf Ali Thanawi, written in Urdu, and from Nagen-drabala Dasi, in Bengali.

In the decades under survey here, the links between social reform and political freedom were not, as they would become in the decades to follow, strongly marked; the nature, and the desired pace, of improvements to Hindu and Muslim society were debated largely on their own merits, without the contenders’ berating each other for enabling the continuation of British rule. Should one proceed gradually in matters of social reform? Should caste separations continue? In this chapter we encounter for the first time the views of an influential low-caste thinker, Jotirao Phule, who argues forcefully in support of women’s emancipation and against the privileges of, and depredations committed by, Brahmans. It is no wonder that—in opposition to Swami Vivekananda, who believes the Aryan homeland to be within India—Phule portrays the Aryan hordes as illegitimate outsiders who spoiled by their invasion the social balance then prevalent in India.

Although some of the concerns of the authors in this chapter will have faded by the early twentieth century—social and religious reform as a value is challenged, and elite Hindus and Muslims no longer feel the need to respond intellectually to Christians and Christian teaching—a careful observer of this period will see hints of views that have only grown in importance over time. Keshab Chandra Sen is moved to hope that Hindus and Muslims will be able to come together in a “national Indian church”; Dayanand Saraswati feels compelled to offer stinging critiques of the *Quran* from a rationalist perspective; and Sir Sayyid, distrusting the newly formed Indian National Congress, asserts his belief that only the British can prevent the two communities from clawing each other’s eyes out. Indeed, looking ahead, we see that the lines of “community” begin to become ever more sharply delineated, as does the gulf created between those who know English well enough to argue in it, and those who do not.

DEBENDRANATH TAGORE: RENEWER OF THE BRAHMO SAMAJ

The influence of Rammohan Roy on succeeding generations was kept alive by the Brahmo Samaj. After Roy’s death in England, his close friend Dwarkanath Tagore, one of India’s first entrepreneurial capitalists, gave the little group his financial sup-

port, but its numbers dwindled steadily. Meanwhile, Dwarkanath's eldest son, Debendranath (1817–1905), who played in Rammohan's yard as a boy in Calcutta, had started a small association of his own, the Tattvabodhini Sabha, that met monthly to discuss religious questions. In 1843 Debendranath merged his group with the remnant of Rammohan Roy's, preserving the original name but injecting a new spirit into the older organization.

Under Debendranath's leadership, the Brahmo Samaj attracted numbers of Bengal's ablest young men, many of them belonging, like Debendranath, to the Brahman caste. Their spiritual center was the worship of the one true God. Like Rammohan Roy, the Brahmos (as they came to be called) opposed both the teachings of Christian missionaries and what they perceived to be the idolatry of popular Hinduism. However, Debendranath did not subscribe to a radical break from orthodox Hindu custom; when his fiery young disciple, Keshab Chandra Sen, split the Samaj by insisting that Brahmos discontinue wearing the sacred thread used by high-caste Hindus, Debendranath withdrew from active leadership and spent months traveling to places of pilgrimage and meditating in the Himalayas. His piety throughout his long life earned him the honorific title of Maharshi, "the great sage."

In addition to his work in strengthening the Brahmo Samaj, Debendranath continued the campaign, started by Rammohan Roy, to revive what was alleged to be an ancient Hindu monotheism. To find an authoritative scriptural canon for the Samaj, he sent four students to Banaras, each assigned to learn one of the four Vedas. Since the results of their researches were inconclusive, Debendranath came increasingly to rely on personal intuition as his authority; he even composed a creed and a sacred book for the use of Brahmos. Their lofty theism and deeply devotional spirit springs from the same blend of Upanishadic and Christian inspiration that we find in the writings of Rammohan Roy.

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN SANSKRITIC AND WESTERN EDUCATION

Debendranath tells in his autobiography the story of his search for religious certainty. The following passage describes the way he resolved the conflict between the two intellectual traditions in which he had been educated.

As on the one hand there were my Sanskrit studies in the search after truth, so on the other hand there was English. I had read numerous English works on philosophy. But with all this, the sense of emptiness of mind remained just the same, nothing could heal it, my heart was being oppressed by that gloom of sadness and feeling of unrest. Did subjection to nature comprise the whole of man's existence? . . . To an atheist this is enough, he does not want anything beyond nature. But how could I rest fully satisfied with this? My endeavor was to obtain God, not through blind faith but by the light of knowledge. And being unsuccessful in this, my mental struggles increased from day to day. Sometimes I thought I could live no longer.

Suddenly, as I thought and thought, a flash as of lightning broke through this darkness of despondency. I saw that knowledge of the material world is born of the senses and the objects of sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste. But together with this knowledge, I am also enabled to know that I am the knower. Simultaneously with the facts of seeing, touching, smelling, and thinking, I also come to know that it is I who see, touch, smell, and think. With the knowledge of objects comes the knowledge of the subject, with the knowledge of the body comes the knowledge of the spirit within. It was after a prolonged search for truth that I found this bit of light, as if a ray of sunshine had fallen on a place full of extreme darkness. . . .

One day, while thinking of these things I suddenly recalled how, long ago, in my early youth, I had once realized the Infinite as manifested in the infinite heavens. Again I turned my gaze towards this infinite sky, studded with innumerable stars and planets, and saw the eternal God, and felt that this glory was His. He is infinite wisdom. He from whom we have derived this limited knowledge of ours, and this body, its receptacle, is Himself without form. He is without body or senses. He did not shape this universe with his hands. By His will alone did He bring it into existence. He is neither the Kali of Kalighat,¹ nor the family Shalgram.² Thus was laid the axe at the root of idolatry.

[From Debendranath Tagore, *The Autobiography of Maharshi Devendranath Tagore*, translated from the Bengali by S. Tagore and I. Devi (London: Macmillan, 1914), 47–49, 50–51.]

THE CALL TO RENUNCIATION, AND A DECISIVE DREAM

Debendranath grew up in a family very much involved in the business world, with the accompanying financial responsibilities and, eventually, troubles, for his father died deeply in debt. Debendranath's own innermost desire, by contrast, was to seek salvation through the traditional path of renunciation. After his father's death, Debendranath was faced with the choice of performing the customary Hindu funeral rites, in which offerings are made to various gods, or of remaining true to his vow to renounce idolatry. The decision came to him in this dream, the conclusion of which gives us a good insight into Debendranath's conceptions of religion and filial piety.

Which would triumph, the world or religion?—one could not tell—this was what worried me. My constant prayer to God was “Vouchsafe strength unto my weak heart, be Thou my refuge.” All these anxieties and troubles would not let me sleep at night, my head felt dazed on the pillow. I would now doze off and again wake up. It was as if I was sleeping on the borderland between waking and sleeping. At such a time some one came to me in the dark and said “Get up,” and I at once sat up. He said “Get out of bed” and I got up; he said “follow me” and I followed. He went down the steps leading out of the inner apartments, I did the same and came out into the courtyard with him. We stood before the front door.

The durwans³ were sleeping. My guide touched the door, and the two wings flew open at once. I went out with him into the street in front of the house. He seemed to be a shadowlike form. I could not see him clearly, but felt myself constrained to do immediately whatever he bade me. From thence he mounted upwards to the sky, I also followed him. . . . In the course of my journey across this plain I entered one of its cities. All the houses and all the streets were of white marble, not a single soul was to be seen in the clean and bright and polished streets. No noise was to be heard, everything was calm and peaceful. My guide entered a house by the road and went up to the second floor, I also went with him. I found myself in a spacious room, in which there were a table and some chairs of white marble. He told me to sit down, and I sat down in one of the chairs. The phantom then vanished. Nobody else was there. I sat silent in that silent room; shortly afterwards the curtain of one of the doors in front of the room was drawn aside and my mother appeared. Her hair was down, just as I had seen it on the day of her death. When she died, I never thought that she was dead. Even when I came back from the burning ground after performing her funeral ceremonies, I could not believe that she was dead. I felt sure that she was still alive. Now I saw that living mother of mine before me. She said "I wanted to see thee, so I sent for thee. Hast thou really become one who has known Brahma? Sanctified is the family, fulfilled is the mother's desire." On seeing her, and hearing these sweet words of hers my slumber gave way before a flood of joy. I found myself still tossing on my bed.

[From Debendranath Tagore, *Autobiography*, 115–116, 117–118.]

THE BRAHMO SAMAJ AND ITS RELATION TO ORTHODOX HINDUISM

After Keshab Chandra Sen had seceded from the Samaj, taking many Brahmos with him, Debendranath pronounced in 1867 his views on "gradualism" in matters of social reform.

We are worshipers of Brahma, the Supreme Being. In this we are at one with Orthodox Hinduism, for all our shastras declare with one voice the supremacy of the worship of Brahma, enjoining image worship for the help of those who are incapable of grasping the highest Truth.

Our first point of distinction is in the positive aspect of our creed wherein worship is defined as consisting in "Loving Him and doing the works He loveth"—this at once differentiates us from all religions and creeds which postulate a special or verbal revelation or wherein definite forms, rites, or ceremonies are deemed essential one way or the other.

The negative aspect of our creed which prohibits the worship of any created being or thing as the Creator further distinguishes us from all who are addicted to the worship of avatars or incarnations or who believe in the necessity of mediators, symbols, or idols of any description.

We base our faith on the fundamental truths of religion, attested by reason and conscience, and refuse to permit man, book, or image to stand in the way of the direct communion of our soul with the Supreme Spirit.

This message of the Brāhmo Samāj in the abstract does not materially differ from the doctrines of the pure theistic bodies all the world over. Viewed historically and socially, however, the Brāhmo Samāj has the further distinction of being the bearer of this message to the Hindu people. This was the idea of its founder Ram Mohun Roy, this points to the duty incumbent upon all Brahmos of today, and will serve as the guiding principle in the selection of texts, forms, and ceremonials as aids to the religious life.

We are in and of the great Hindu community and it devolves upon us by example and precept to hold up as a beacon the highest truths of the Hindu shastras. In their light must we purify our heritage of customs, usages, rites, and ceremonies and adapt them to the needs of our conscience and our community. But we must beware of proceeding too fast in matters of social change, lest we be separated from the greater body whom we would guide and uplift.

While we should on no account allow any consideration of country, caste, or kinship to prevent our actions being consistent with our faith, we must make every allowance for, and abstain from, persecuting or alienating those who think differently from us. Why should we needlessly wound the feelings of our parents and elders by desecrating an image which they regard with the highest reverence, when all that our conscience can demand of us is to refrain from its adoration?

The steering of this middle course is by no means an easy task, but during my long experience I have been led greatly to hope for a brighter future by the sympathetic response of our orthodox brethren to the ideal held up before them. The amount of conformity nowadays expected by even the most orthodox, demands so little of us that a little tact and common sense will in most cases be sufficient to obviate all friction.

Nevertheless, great as are the claims of our land and our people, we must never forget that we are Brahmos first, and Indians or Hindus afterwards. We must on no account depart from our vow of renouncing the worship of images and incarnations, which is of the essence of our religion. It is a sound policy on our part to sink our minor differences, but on matters of principle no compromise is possible. Our Motherland is dear to us, but Religion is dearer, Brahma is dearest of all, dearer than son, dearer than riches, supreme over everything else.

[From Debendranath Tagore, *Autobiography*, 152–153.]

KESHAB CHANDRA SEN AND THE INDIANIZATION OF CHRISTIANITY

The stormy career of Keshab Chandra Sen (Anglicized in his own time as Keshub Chunder Sen) (1838–1884) encompassed both the peak and the later decline of the influence of the Brahmo Samaj on Indian intellectual life. With his great energy and

oratorical skill, he brought to fulfillment the openness to Christian inspiration of Rammohan Roy and the intuitionist doctrine of Debendranath Tagore. Yet his very enthusiasm was his undoing, for by the time of his death he had caused the Samaj to shatter into three separate organizations and had irrevocably damaged its prestige.

Keshab joined the Samaj when he was nineteen, and within a short time had become Debendranath's most beloved disciple. His fiery oratory in fluent English stirred educated audiences in many parts of India, especially in Bombay, and branches of the Samaj sprang up in cities beyond the borders of Bengal. In 1860 he published his first Brahmo tract, *Young Bengal: This Is For You*, which argued for the necessity of social reform (as against the conservative orthodox) through a Brahmo-derived religious sensibility (as against the Vidyasagar-inspired atheists).

Keshab's zeal for reform carried him far beyond the moderate position taken by Debendranath. When the two reformers finally parted company in 1865 over the wearing of the sacred thread, Keshab set up an independent organization that he named the Brahmo Samaj of India. In 1878 a more dangerous fissure opened within his own movement. Despite his advocacy of a minimum age for Brahmo marriages, and his opposition to idolatry, he married his thirteen-year-old daughter to a Hindu prince, feeling that such was the will of God. Scandalized by this betrayal of his previous principles, most of his followers abandoned him and set up a third group, the Sadharan (General) Brahmo Samaj.

Toward the end of his life, Keshab experimented with synthesizing elements from the world's major religions. He borrowed Hindu devotional practices, emphasizing the blissful street-singing behavior of the Vaishnava saint Chaitanya, and was influenced by his meeting with Ramakrishna in 1875 to draw inspiration from "the motherhood of God." From this year onward he also commissioned his core followers to steep themselves in the study of the various religious traditions of the world; in a few cases—Girish Chandra Sen's thirty works on Islam and Aghore Nath Gupta's life of the Buddha—their scholarship produced fair assessments and expositions unprecedented for their time.

In addition to Hindu resources, Keshab mined Christian teachings and practices. The New Dispensation (Nava Vidhan) that he proclaimed in 1879 appropriated much from the Christian church it claimed to supplant, including a direct revelation from God, apostles, missionaries, monastic orders, and the doctrines of sin, salvation, and the divinity of Christ. Keshab never wanted to become a Christian, but rather sought Indian expressions for his own devotion to Jesus. To his detractors, his near self-deification at the end of his life, placing himself in a direct line from Moses and Jesus, was the exact opposite of the original vision of the Brahmo Samaj under Debendranath, for whom God was known through imageless prayer and intuition, not the ecstatic teachings of a God-man.

His praise for British rule and disdain for the Indian freedom movement mark Keshab as a man of his era (he died one year before the formation of the Indian National Congress); his New Dispensation, which had cohered largely through his charismatic force of character, collapsed shortly after his death. Nevertheless, he has had a more long-lasting legacy in other respects. He was a popular spokesman for Hindu

reform in England in 1870, twenty years before Swami Vivekananda went to the West with a similar message; though a non-Christian, he was a pioneer in the formulation of an indigenous Christianity; and his rational call for a universal religion based on a unification between East and West, science and faith, and for the end to sectarian conflict, foreshadowed similar arguments by Vivekananda, Tagore, and others in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

LOYALTY TO THE BRITISH NATION

Keshab was only voicing the sentiments of his time when he declared British rule providential for India. His conviction that India had a reciprocal contribution to make to England was a relatively new idea, and one that was to take on increasing importance in the nationalist era. This speech was delivered in Calcutta in 1877, shortly after Queen Victoria had assumed the title of Empress of India.

Loyalty shuns an impersonal abstraction. It demands a person, and that person is the sovereign, or the head of the state, in whom law and constitutionalism are visibly typified and represented. We are right then if our loyalty means not only respect for law and the Parliament, but personal attachment to Victoria, Queen of England and Empress of India. [*Applause.*] What makes loyalty so enthusiastic is not, however, the presence of purely secular feelings, but of a strong religious sentiment. By loyalty I mean faith in Providence. . . . Do you not believe that there is God in history? Do you not recognize the finger of special providence in the progress of nations? Assuredly the record of British rule in India is not a chapter of profane history, but of ecclesiastical history. [*Cheers.*] . . . You are bound to be loyal to the British government, that came to your rescue, as God's ambassador, when your country was sunk in ignorance and superstition and hopeless jejuneness, and has since lifted you to your present high position. This work is not of man, but of God, and He has done it, and is doing it, through the British nation. As His chosen instruments, then, honor your sovereign and the entire ruling body with fervent loyalty. The more loyal we are, the more we shall advance with the aid of our rulers in the path of moral, social, and political reformation. India in her present fallen condition seems destined to sit at the feet of England for many long years, to learn Western art and science. And, on the other hand, behold England sits at the feet of hoary-headed India to study the ancient literature of this country. [*Applause.*] All Europe seems to be turning her attention in these days towards Indian antiquities, to gather the priceless treasures which lie buried in the literature of Vedism and Buddhism. Thus while we learn modern science from England, England learns ancient wisdom from India. Gentlemen, in the advent of the English nation in India we see a reunion of parted cousins, the descendants of two different families of the ancient Aryan race. Here they have met together, under an overruling Provi-

dence, to serve most important purposes in the Divine economy. The mutual intercourse between England and India, political as well as social, is destined to promote the true interests and lasting glory of both nations.

[From "Philosophy and Madness in Religion," in *Keshub Chunder Sen's Lectures in India* (Calcutta: Brahmo Tract Society, 1883), 250–252.]

THE ASIATIC CHRIST

While Rammohan Roy welcomed only the moral influence of Jesus, Keshab embraced Christ as the fulfillment of India's devotional striving. He also took Roy's assertion that Jesus was an Asian by birth and used it as an argument for better understanding between the rulers and the ruled in India. The following lecture, "Jesus Christ: Europe and Asia," was delivered in 1866.

Europeans and natives are both the children of God, and the ties of brotherhood should bind them together. Extend, then, to us, O ye Europeans in India! the right hand of fellowship, to which we are fairly entitled. If, however, our Christian friends persist in traducing our nationality and national character, and in distrusting and hating Orientalism, let me assure them that I do not in the least feel dishonored by such imputations. On the contrary, I rejoice, yea, I am proud, that I am an Asiatic. And was not Jesus Christ an Asiatic? [*Deafening applause.*] Yes, and his disciples were Asiatics, and all the agencies primarily employed for the propagation of the Gospel were Asiatic. In fact, Christianity was founded and developed by Asiatics, and in Asia. When I reflect on this, my love for Jesus becomes a hundredfold intensified; I feel him nearer my heart, and deeper in my national sympathies. Why should I then feel ashamed to acknowledge that nationality which he acknowledged? Shall I not rather say he is more congenial and akin to my Oriental nature, more agreeable to my Oriental habits of thought and feeling? And is it not true that an Asiatic can read the imageries and allegories of the Gospel, and its descriptions of natural sceneries, of customs, and manners, with greater interest, and a fuller perception of their force and beauty, than Europeans? [*Cheers.*] In Christ we see not only the exaltedness of humanity, but also the grandeur of which Asiatic nature is susceptible. To us Asiatics, therefore, Christ is doubly interesting, and his religion is entitled to our peculiar regard as an altogether Oriental affair. The more this great fact is pondered, the less I hope will be the antipathy and hatred of European Christians against Oriental nationalities, and the greater the interest of the Asiatics in the teachings of Christ. And thus in Christ, Europe and Asia, the East and the West, may learn to find harmony and unity. [*Deafening applause.*]

[From *Keshub Chunder Sen's Lectures in India*, 25–26.]

AN INDIAN NATIONAL CHURCH

Keshab saw in the simple theism of the Brahmo Samaj a platform on which the major religious traditions of India—Hindu, Muslim, Christian—could unite. The resulting faith, he thought, would not only sustain the future church of India, but also qualify India to take part in a worldwide religious brotherhood. Keshab's expectation, expressed here in an address from 1869, that Hindus and Muslims would willingly merge into this national church, is but one more example of his supreme optimism.

I have briefly described the general features of the church of the future—its worship, creed, and gospel. Before I conclude I must say a few words with special reference to this country. There are some among us who denounce Mahomedanism as wholly false, while others contend that Hinduism is altogether false. Such opinions are far from being correct; they only indicate the spirit of sectarian antipathy. Do you think that millions of men would to this day attach themselves so devotedly to these systems of faith unless there was something really valuable and true in them? This cannot be. There is, no doubt, in each of these creeds, much to excite to ridicule, and perhaps indignation—a large amount of superstition, prejudice, and even corruption. But I must emphatically say it is wrong to set down Hinduism or Mahomedanism as nothing but a mass of lies and abominations, and worthy of being trampled under foot. Proscribe and eliminate all that is false therein: there remains a residue of truth and purity which you are bound to honor. . . . The signs of the times already indicate this process of purification and development; and I believe this process will gradually bring Hinduism and Mahomedanism, hitherto so hostile to each other, into closer union, till the two ultimately harmonize to form the future church of India. . . .

As regards Christianity and its relation to the future church of India, I have no doubt in my mind that it will exercise great influence on the growth and formation of that church. The spirit of Christianity has already pervaded the whole atmosphere of Indian society, and we breathe, think, feel, and move in a Christian atmosphere. . . .

But the future church of India must be thoroughly national; it must be an essentially Indian church. The future religion of the world I have described will be the common religion of all nations, but in each nation it will have an indigenous growth, and assume a distinctive and peculiar character. All mankind will unite in a universal church; at the same time, it will be adapted to the peculiar circumstances of each nation, and assume a national form. No country will borrow or mechanically imitate the religion of another country; but from the depths of the life of each nation its future church will naturally grow up. And shall not India have its own national church?

[From "The Future Church," in *Keshub Chunder Sen's Lectures in India*, 120–123.]

A NEW SACRAMENTAL CEREMONY

Keshab's appropriation of Christian elements extended beyond ideas, to include ritual. In recounting an event that occurred in 1881, in Keshab's own home, *The New Dispensation* newspaper describes the following Brahmo-ized eucharist.

Jesus! Is the Sacramental rite meant only for those nations that are in the habit of taking bread and wine? Are the Hindus excluded from partaking of the holy eucharist? Wilt thou cut us off because we are rice-eaters and teetotalers? That cannot be. Spirit of Jesus! That cannot be. Both unto Europe and Asia thou hast said,—eat my flesh and drink my blood. Therefore the Hindu shall eat thy flesh in rice and drink thy blood in pure water, so that the scripture might be fulfilled in this land.

On Sunday the 6th March, the ceremony of adapting the sacrament to Hindu life was performed with due solemnity in accordance with the principle above set forth. The Hindu apostles of Christ gathered after prayer in the dinner-hall, and sat upon the floor upon bare ground. Upon a silver plate was Rice, and in a small goblet was Water, and there were flowers and leaves around both.

[From *Keshub Chunder Sen: A Selection*, ed. David C. Scott (Bangalore: Christian Literature Society, 1979), 334–335.]

DAYANAND SARASWATI: VEDIC REVIVALIST

In 1875 the Arya Samaj (literally, “Society of the Noble”) was established in Bombay. It became a major force for religious and social reform in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the Hindi-speaking areas of north India. Arya Samajists played a leading role in the nationalist movement, but were also prominent in business, publishing, and education. Today they manage the largest nongovernmental education system in India, the D. A. V. (Dayanand Anglo Vedic) schools.

The founder of the Arya Samaj was born to a Brahman family in Gujarat in 1824. Developing a strong aversion to life in the world, as well as to the Shiva-worship of his father, he ran away from home as a young man to become a renouncer, and took the name Dayanand Saraswati. His Arya Samaj proved a substantial success, especially in Punjab, attracting middle-ranking caste and social groups just moving into prominence under colonial auspices. To promulgate his revivalist views, Dayanand wrote and published prolifically, using his own printing press to disseminate his work.

Dayanand was a stern critic. He rejected polytheism and mocked the worship of idols. He was also a social reformer, condemning child marriage and sati, and advocating education for girls as well as boys. In principle, Dayanand endorsed caste, but he radically reinterpreted it, advocating a practice in which caste identity would be determined by the qualities of each individual. (Not surprisingly, he left the actual workings of such a system very murky.) Dayanand mercilessly attacked contemporary Hinduism, urging the revival of what he considered to be the ancient religion of the Vedas. He

wrote commentaries on the oldest Vedic literature to try to show in them an exalted spiritual monotheism, making the Vedas available to a wide audience in a way that was unprecedented. He died in 1883.

AWAKENING AGAINST IDOLATRY

In this autobiographical account from 1879, Dayanand traces his doubts about image worship to an incident in his childhood. The image of Shiva over which he saw mice climbing is the aniconic Shiva-linga, a tall shaft rounded at the top.

When the night of Shiva⁴ came, having heard the praises in the sermon on the thirteenth day, my father decided that we would keep the night of Shiva vow. Though my mother forbade it and said, “The vow cannot be kept by him,” even so my father had me start the vow. . . . We did the worship for the first watch of the night, and having done the worship for the second watch, the priests went outside and slept.

I remembered hearing from the start that there would be no benefit from the night of Shiva fast if one slept. So I splashed drops of water on my eyes and stayed awake, but my father fell asleep. Then I wondered if this was the Great God of whom I had heard in the sermons, or something else, because this god seemed like a human being. In sermons a kind of Great God is spoken of who rides an ox, and wanders around, and eats and drinks, and carries a trident in his hand, and beats a drum, and gives out boons and curses, and is the lord of Mount Kailasa,⁵ and so forth. Then I woke up my father and I asked him, “Is this the Great God of the sermons or someone else?” And my father said, “Why do you ask?” So I said, “The Great God of the sermons is conscious. Why would he let mice climb on him? But there are mice crawling over this.” My father replied, “An image has been made of the Great God who lives on Kailasa, and he has been invoked and is worshiped here. Now in this dark age, there is no direct vision of this Shiva. So the Great God of Kailasa is pleased with the worship of those who make images of him out of stone and other materials and who are devoted to him.” Listening to this there was a doubt in my mind, “There must be some mixup here.”

[From Dayanand Saraswati, *Atma-Katha*
(Ajmer: Vaidik Pustakalaya, 1983), 7–8.⁶]

CRITIQUE OF ISLAM

Dayanand's most popular book is called *Satyarth Prakash* (“truth-seeking light”), originally published in 1875. In its first ten chapters, Dayanand sets forth his own views; in the eleventh chapter he blames India's benighted state on its priests, who abuse their exalted social status and swindle the poor; and in the final four chapters he criticizes the religions of others—Hinduism, non-Hindu religions of India, Chris-

tianity, and Islam. The three passages that follow are all from the fourteenth chapter. Here Dayanand focuses not on the contemporary Muslim community but on the Islamic scripture. Our first passage is typical of the style throughout the chapter, with Dayanand quoting passages from the *Quran* and then condemning them as absurd, often on the basis of a literalist reading. The Zaid mentioned in the second passage was the adopted son of Muhammad. Here Allah permits the Prophet to marry Zaid's ex-wife. Finally, though Dayanand's criticism of Islam (and other religions) is strong, in the third passage below he insists that his goal is not division, but a unity born of separating true from false.

"They are the people upon whose hearts, and ears, and eyes Allah has put a seal, but they are oblivious. . . . And they will be given everything, on the basis of what they did, and no injustice will be done to them." *Quran* 16.108, 111.

Commentary: When God himself has placed the seal, then those poor people are killed without having committed any crime. Because they are bound. How great a crime is this? And then it is said that just as someone has done, even so he will be rewarded, neither less nor more. Yet he didn't even commit the sin independently, rather God made him do it. Once again, it is not his crime, so he should not get the result of it. It would be proper for God to get the result.

And if everything will be given, then of what does forgiveness consist? And when there is forgiveness, then justice disappears. Such muddled justice could never be the Lord's. But it could be that of an unintelligent child.

"And We have made hell for the unbelievers, a place of confinement. . . . And We will get out the book on the day of judgment, the book of deeds which we have hung upon the neck of each person, and open it and see. . . . And We have destroyed many peoples since Noah." *Quran* 17.8, 13, 17.

Commentary: If unbelievers are just those who do not have faith in the God, seventh heaven, prayer, and so forth of the *Quran* and the *Quran's* prophet, and hell is for only them, then it is definite that this is simply a matter of favoritism. Because can it ever be that the believers in the *Quran* are all good, and the believers in other things are all evil?

The idea of the book of deeds on each person's neck is very childish. We don't see even one on anyone's neck. If its purpose is to give the fruits of one's deeds, then what kind of game is being played when people's hearts, eyes, and so forth are sealed and sins are forgiven? . . . When God Himself destroyed the souls of those long bound who did no crime, He became unjust. When He is unjust, He cannot be God.

"When Zaid had settled the matter, then We gave her to you to marry, so there would be no restriction on believers if the wives of adopted sons were married, once the matter was settled. And this is a command issued by God. . . . No restriction can be put on the prophet because of this." *Quran* 33.37, 38.

Commentary: . . . From this it is proven that Muhammad Sahib was a big sensualist. If not, then why did he make his adopted son's wife, who was his son's wife, his own wife? And then the person who does this sort of thing makes even God prejudiced in his favor and establishes injustice as justice. Among humans, even someone who lives in the jungle avoids the wife of his son. . . .

Who could be so blind of heart as to believe that this Quran was written by the Lord, and the Muhammad Sahib was a prophet, and the lord spoken of by the Quran is the Highest Lord? It is astonishing that the Arabs and other people should believe in this creed which is mixed up with things like this that are opposed to religion and devoid of reason.

...

Now, having written about the Quran, I lay before the intelligent the question: How is this book? If you ask me, this book was made neither by the Lord nor by a learned person, and it cannot be called a book of knowledge.

Only a few of its faults have been presented, so that people will not be hoodwinked and waste their lives. Learned and intelligent people accept the truths of other religions without obstinacy or prejudice, just as I have accepted whatever little is true in the Quran because it is consistent with books of knowledge such as the Vedas. Excluding that, whatever is in the Quran spreads a net of ignorance and makes people into animals, it breaks the peace and raises a ruckus, and it is a subject that spreads rebellion and promotes mutual misery. And the Quran is a veritable storehouse of redundancy.

May the Highest Spirit show mercy to people so that all may have the inclination to promote love for all, mutual concord, and the happiness of one with another. If all learned people would publish the faults of their own religion and others' without prejudice as I have done, then what would be the difficulty in everyone giving up their mutual opposition, agreeing and blissfully uniting in one religion, and successfully attaining the truth?

[From D. Saraswati, *Satyartha-Prakasah*, 2nd ed., ed. Y. Mimansak (Bahalgarh, Sonipat: Ram Lal Kapoor Trust, 1975), 899–900, 918–920, and 947. Trans. J. Llewellyn.]

A DEBATE WITH A CHRISTIAN

Dayanand loved to engage in religious debates, usually with orthodox Hindus, but occasionally with representatives of other faiths. The following summary of his 1877 debate with a Christian minister gives a good picture of his aggressively critical attitude.

As time was short, after some talk it was decided that the question "What is salvation and how to attain it," should be discussed. . . .

Rev. Scott said:

"Salvation does not mean deliverance from woes. Salvation only means to be saved from sins and to obtain Heaven. God had created Adam pure, but he was misled by Satan and committed sin which made all his descendants sinful.

Man commits sin of his own accord as the clock works by itself, that is to say, one cannot avoid committing sin by one's own effort and so cannot get salvation. One can obtain salvation only by believing in Christ. Wherever Christianity spreads, people are saved from sin. I have attained salvation by believing in Christ." . . .

Swamiji replied that:

"Suffering is the necessary result of sin; whoever avoids sin will be saved from suffering. The Christians believe God to be powerful; but to believe that Satan misled Adam to commit sin is to believe that God is not All powerful; for, if God had been All powerful, Satan could not have misled Adam, who had been created pure by God. No sensible man can believe that Adam committed sin and all his descendants became sinful. He alone undergoes suffering who commits sin; no one else. You say that Satan misleads everyone, I therefore ask you who misled Satan. . . . The only one who could have done it was God. In that case when God himself misleads and gets others to commit sin, then how can He save people from sin? . . . Again, when God's only son suffered crucifixion for the sins of all people, then the people need not be afraid of being punished for their sins and they can go on committing sins with impunity. The illustration of the clock given by the Padree sahib is also inappropriate. "The clock works only as its maker has given it the power to do. The clock cannot alter it. Then again how can you continue to live in Paradise?"

[From Har Bilas Sarda, *Life of Dayanand Saraswati*
(Ajmer: Vedic Yantralaya, 1946), 170–172.]

THE VIRTUES OF EUROPEANS

Even though he disliked Christianity, Swami Dayanand was impressed by the moral qualities of India's European rulers—but warned of the folly of aping them superficially.

Q.—We see that the Europeans have made so much progress because they wear round-toed shoes, coats, pants etc. and eat in hotels, food cooked by any person.

A.—You are mistaken. Moslems and low caste people eat food cooked by any one, yet they have made no progress. The advancement of the Europeans is due to the following points; absence of early marriage; good education of boys and girls; marriage according to the choice of the married couple; no preaching by undesirable persons; they educate themselves and do not fall into the snares of anybody; whatever they do is done with mutual consultation; they devote their body, soul and wealth to the well-being of their country; they are not indolent and work very hard; they allow into their offices and courts only English shoes and not Indian shoes. This one point is sufficient to show how patriotic they are—they respect the shoes of their country more than they respect the men of other countries. These Europeans have come into this country for a little more than a hundred years, yet wear coarse clothes as they do in their own country.

They have not forsaken the way of their country. Many of you have copied their ways. This shows that they are wise and you are foolish. Copying is not a sign of wisdom. These Europeans are very dutiful and well disciplined. They always help the trade of their country. These qualifications and deeds have contributed to their advancement, and not round-toed shoes, coat, pants; eating in hotels, or other evils.

[From D. Saraswati, *The Light of Truth*, trans. G. Prasad Upadhyaya (Allahabad: Kala Press, 1960), 549–550.]

AGAINST THE HINDU REFORM MOVEMENTS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Despite the fact that the Arya, Brahmo, and Prarthana Samaj movements appear to have been shaped by a similar reformist impulse, in their own time they were fiercely critical of one another.

1. . . . The Brāhma Samāja and Prārthanā Samāja are . . . not good in all respects. How can the principles of these who are unaware of the Vedic lore be all good? They saved many persons from the clutches of Christianity, they removed idolatry also to a certain extent, and they protected people from the snares of certain spurious scriptures. These are all good points. But they are lacking in patriotism. They have borrowed much from Christianity in their way of living. They have also changed the rules of marriage etc.

2. Instead of praising their country and glorifying their ancestors, they speak ill of them. In their lectures they eulogize Christians and Englishmen. They do not even mention the names of old sages, Brahmā etc. . . .

3. Not only do they not respect the Vedas etc. but they do not desist from condemning them. The books of the Brāhma Samāja include among the saints Christ, Moses, Mohammad, Nānāka and Chaitanyā. They do not mention even the name of ṛshis and sages of ancient India. . . . The Brāhma Samājīsts and Prārthanā Samājīsts call themselves educated, though they have no knowledge of the literature of their own country, i.e., Sanskrita. No permanent sort of reform is expected from those who, in their pride for English education, are ready to launch a new religion.

4. They observe no restrictions on interdining with Englishmen, Moslems and low class people. They are perhaps under the impression that they and their country would be regenerated simply by removing the restriction of food and caste.

[From D. Saraswati, *The Light of Truth*, 548–549.]

SHRI RAMAKRISHNA: MYSTIC AND SPIRITUAL TEACHER

Shri Ramakrishna (1836–1886) was among the most saintly of the many religious leaders to whom modern India has given birth. Like Debendranath and Keshab, he was a

son of Bengal; unlike them, he was a child of the soil and never lost his rustic simplicity. Like Dayanand, he was taken in his time to personify the rebirth of an ancient tradition in the midst of increasing Westernization and modernization. But, unlike the aggressive Dayanand, Ramakrishna practiced a gentle faith of selfless devotion to the divine, whom he loved best as Kālī, the Divine Mother, popularized in Ramprasad's eighteenth-century songs.

At the age of sixteen he was taken by his older brother to Calcutta, where they both were installed as priests of a new temple at Dakshineswar on the Hooghly River, a branch of the Ganges. For the next twelve years Ramakrishna put himself through every known type of spiritual discipline in a determined search for God. Finally his efforts were rewarded with a series of mystical experiences during which he saw God in a variety of manifestations—as the Divine Mother, Sītā, Rāma, Krishna, Muhammad, and Jesus—and worshiped God in the manner of Muslims, Jains, and Buddhists—in each suiting his dress, food, and meditation to the particular religious tradition concerned. It was this serial religious experimentation that may have inspired Keshab Chandra Sen's interreligious quests.

Through Keshab, Ramakrishna began to attract disciples from the Westernized middle class of Calcutta. His simplicity and purity made a profound impression on these young men, and he taught them to draw strength from the living traditions of popular Hinduism. Ramakrishna died painfully of throat cancer at the age of fifty. He interpreted his agony and death as the will of the Divine Mother; some of his more Christian-influenced disciples read the suffering as his willing assumption of their karma.

THE FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH KĀLĪ

This famous event in Ramakrishna's life demonstrates his tenacity and willingness to lose all for the sake of directly experiencing the divine. It is narrated by Swami Saradananda, a direct disciple, and refers approximately to the year 1856.

We were told by the Master himself that one day at that time, he sang for the Divine Mother to hear, and then prayed to Her, weeping in his eagerness to have the vision, "Dost Thou not, O Mother, hear even a little of the many prayers I address to Thee? Thou didst show Thyself to Ramprasad. Why shouldst Thou not then reveal Thyself to me?"

He used to say, "There was then an intolerable anguish in my heart because I could not have her vision. Just as a man wrings a towel forcibly to squeeze out all the water from it, I felt as if somebody caught hold of my heart and mind and was wringing them likewise. Greatly afflicted with the thought that I might never have Mother's vision, I was in great agony. I thought that there was no use in living such a life. My eyes suddenly fell upon the sword that was there in the Mother's temple. I made up my mind to put an end to my life with it that very moment. Like one mad, I ran and caught hold of it, when suddenly I had the wonderful vision of the Mother, and fell down unconscious. I did not know

what happened then in the external world—how that day and the next slipped away. But, in my heart of hearts, there was flowing a current of intense bliss, never experienced before, and I had the immediate knowledge of the Light that is Mother.”

[From Swami Saradananda, *Ramakrishna, The Great Master*, trans. Swami Jagadananda (Mylapore: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1952), 162–163.]

MEETING JESUS

Unlike Rammohan Roy or Keshab Chandra Sen, who made detailed studies of Christian teaching, Ramakrishna encountered Jesus experientially. The following incident from his early period of religious practice has led his followers to insist not only that Ramakrishna understood Jesus but also that Ramakrishna was in fact one with him. The setting is the garden house of a Bengali Christian friend in Calcutta.

There were some good pictures hanging on the walls of that room. One of those pictures was that of the child Jesus in his mother's lap. The Master used to say that he sat one day in that parlour and was looking intently at that picture and thinking of the extraordinary life of Jesus, when he felt that the picture came to life, and that effulgent rays of light, coming out from the bodies of the mother and the Child, entered into his heart and changed radically all the ideas of his mind! On finding that all the inborn Hindu impressions were disappearing into a secluded corner of his mind and that different ones were arising, he tried in various ways to control himself and prayed earnestly to the Divine Mother, “What strange changes art Thou bringing about in me, Mother?” But nothing availed. Rising with a great force, the waves of those impressions completely submerged the Hindu ideas in his mind. His love and devotion to the Devas and Devis vanished, and in their stead, a great faith in, and reverence for Jesus and his religion occupied his mind. . . . The Master came back to Dakshineswar temple and remained constantly absorbed in the meditation of those inner happenings. He forgot altogether to go to the temple of the Divine Mother and pay obeisance to Her. The waves of those ideas had a mastery of his mind in that manner for three days. At last, when the third day was about to close, the Master saw, while walking under the Panchavati,⁷ that a marvelous god-man of very fair complexion was coming towards him, looking steadfastly at him. As soon as the Master saw that person, he knew that he was a foreigner. He saw that his long eyes gave a wonderful beauty to his face, and that the tip of his nose, though a little flat, did not at all impair that beauty. The master was charmed to see the extraordinary divine expression of that handsome face, and wondered who he was. Very soon the person approached him, and thereupon from the depth of the Master's pure heart came out with a ringing sound, the words, “Jesus the Christ! the great Yogi, the loving Son of God, one with the Father, who gave his heart's blood and put up with endless tortures in order to deliver man from sor-

row and misery!" Jesus, the god-man, then embraced the Master and disappeared into his body and the Master entered into ecstasy, lost normal consciousness and remained identified for some time with the omnipresent Brahman with attributes. Having attained the vision of Jesus thus, the Master became free from the slightest doubt about Christ's having been an incarnation of God.

[From *Sri Ramakrishna, The Great Master*, 338–339.]

THE DEIFICATION OF RAMAKRISHNA'S WIFE

Ramakrishna, a married man, could be consistent in his denial of women and gold because he and his wife, Sharada Devi (the Holy Mother) never consummated their marriage; they lived together on what was apparently an altogether different, spiritual plane. The following memory, of 1873, is from Swami Saradananda. "Samadhi" is a bliss-filled state of union with the divine.

Ordained by the Divine Mother, an extraordinary desire arose in his heart now, which he carried out into practice without the slightest hesitation. We shall now tell the reader in a connected way what we heard about it now and then from the Master. . . .

It was the day of a special festival at the Dakshineswar temple. The Master had made special preparations on that day with a view to worshipping the Mother of the universe. The preparations, however, had not been made in the temple, but, privately, in his own room at his desire. . . . It was 9 p.m. when all the preparations for the mystery-worship of the Devi were completed. In the meantime, the Master had sent word to the Holy Mother to be present during the worship. She came to the room and the Master started the worship.

The articles of worship were purified by the Mantas and all the rites preliminary to the worship were finished. The Master beckoned to the Holy Mother to sit on the wooden seat decorated with the Alimpana. While witnessing the worship, the Holy Mother had already entered into a divine semi-conscious state. Not clearly conscious, therefore, of what she was doing, she like one charmed with Mantras, sat facing north to the right of the Master, who was seated with his face to the east. According to scriptural injunctions the Master sprinkled the Holy Mother repeatedly with the water purified by Mantras from the pitcher placed before him, then uttered the Mantra in her hearing and then recited the prayer:

"O Lady, O Mother Tripurasundari who art the controller of all powers, open the door to perfection! Purify her [the Holy Mother's] body and mind, manifest Thyself in her and be beneficent."

Afterwards the Master . . . worshipped her with the sixteen articles, as the Devi Herself. He then offered food and put a part of it into her mouth with his own hand. The Holy Mother lost normal consciousness and went into Samadhi. The Master, too, uttering Mantras in the semi-conscious state, entered into

complete Samadhi. The worshipper in Samadhi became perfectly identified and united with the Devi in Samadhi.

[From *Sri Ramakrishna, The Great Master*, 334–335.]

WITH THE BRAHMO SAMAJ

Many famed personalities of the day came into contact with Ramakrishna: Bankim Chandra Chatterji, Michael Madhusudan Datta, Girish Chandra Ghosh, Shivanath Sastri, Keshab Chandra Sen, and Ishvarchandra Vidyasagar. The following is Ramakrishna's account of his meeting with Debendranath Tagore, as he described it, in October 1884.

Once I visited Devendranath Tagore with Mathur Babu. I said to Mathur: "I have heard that Devendra Tagore thinks of God. I should like to see him." "All right," said Mathur, "I will take you to him. We were fellow students in the Hindu College and I am very friendly with him." We went to Devendra's house. Mathur and Devendra had not seen each other for a long time. Devendra said to Mathur: "You have changed a little. You have grown fat around the stomach." Mathur said, referring to me, "He has come to see you. He is always mad about God." I wanted to see Devendra's physical marks and said to him, "Let me see your body." He pulled up his shirt and I found that he had very fair skin tinted red. His hair had not yet turned grey.

At the outset I noticed a little vanity in Devendra. And isn't that natural? He had such wealth, such scholarship, such name and fame! Noting that streak of vanity, I asked Mathur: "Well, is vanity the outcome of knowledge or ignorance? Can a knower of Brahman have such a feeling as, 'I am a scholar; I am a jñāni [mystical knower]; I am rich'?"

While I was talking with Devendra, I suddenly got into that state of mind in which I can see a man as he really is. . . .

I found that Devendra had combined both yoga and bhoga⁸ in his life. He had a number of children, all young. The family physician was there. Thus, you see, though he was a jñāni, yet he was preoccupied with worldly life. I said to him: . . . "I have heard that you live in the world and think of God; so I have come to see you. Please tell me something about God."

He recited some texts from the Vedas. He said, "This universe is like a chandelier and each living being is a light in it." Once, meditating in the Panchavati, I too had had a vision like that. I found his words agreed with my vision, and I thought he must be a very great man. I asked him to explain his words. He said: "God has created men to manifest His own glory; otherwise, who could know this universe? Everything becomes dark without the lights in the chandelier. One cannot even see the chandelier itself."

We talked a long time. Devendra was pleased and said to me, "You must come to our Brāhmo Samāj festival." "That," I said, "depends on the will of

God. You can see my state of mind. There is no knowing when God will put me into a particular state.” Devendra insisted: “No, you must come. But put on your cloth and wear a shawl over your body. Someone might say something unkind about your untidiness, and that would hurt me.” “No,” I replied, “I cannot promise that. I cannot be a babu.” Devendra and Mathur laughed.

[From [Mahendra Nath Gupta], *The Gospel of Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, 1942), 650.]

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: HINDU MISSIONARY TO THE WEST

Among Shri Ramakrishna's disciples was a young Calcutta-born student on whom he showered special attention and praise. This boy, Narendranath Datta (1863–1902), came from a Kayastha⁹ family of lawyers and had received a good Western-style education. When he first visited Ramakrishna, he was planning to study law in England, the high road to success in British India. Within a year's time, however, his interviews with the mystic had changed the course of his life. He resolved to give up worldly pursuits and adopt the life of a *sannyāsī*. After twelve years of ascetic discipline, he became famous as Swami Vivekananda, the apostle to the world of his master's philosophy of God-realization.

Vivekananda's meteoric career as missionary of Vedantic Hinduism to the West began in 1893 when he addressed the first World Parliament of Religions at Chicago. He spent four of the remaining years of his life lecturing in the United States and Europe (1893–1896 and 1899–1900); in his return visits to India he was greeted as a national hero and took up the task of regenerating his fellow countrymen. He literally burned himself out in their service, dedicating the Ramakrishna Mission to social work and religious education, rousing people in fiery speeches to uplift the millions of India's poor.

Although he died at thirty-nine, Vivekananda's example had a powerful impact on the thinking of his own and later generations. Despite his scorn for politics, his success in preaching to the world the greatness of Hinduism gave his countrymen an added sense of dignity and pride in their own culture. His zeal for serving the downtrodden masses opened a new dimension of activity to Indian nationalist leaders, whose Western outlook had heretofore isolated them from the vast majority of their countrymen.

In spite of Vivekananda's call to India to become great by realizing her own possibilities and recognizing the divinity of each person, his message was not completely inclusive. When in the West he undercut the speeches of Pandita Ramabai, by denying her accusations, leveled against Brahmanical society, of cruelty to women (see the selection on her below). Moreover, his list of Indian brothers included low-caste Hindus but not Muslims; since his death he has been taken up by Hindu nationalists, who value his call for a proud, masculine, regenerated India that is to be defined in almost entirely Hindu terms.

SISTERS AND BROTHERS OF AMERICA

In his celebrated opening speech in Chicago on September 11, 1893, Vivekananda, claiming to represent all of Hindu India, enunciated his pride in his own tradition, his belief in the unity of all religions, and his disappointment over continuing religious intolerance.

Sisters and Brothers of America,

It fills my heart with joy unspeakable to rise in response to the warm and cordial welcome which you have given us. I thank you in the name of the most ancient order of monks in the world; and I thank you in the name of millions and millions of Hindu people of all classes and sects.

My thanks, also, to some of the speakers on this platform, who, referring to the delegates from the Orient, have told you that these men from far-off nations may well claim the honour of bearing to different lands the idea of toleration. I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true. I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth. I am proud to tell you that we have gathered in our bosom the purest remnant of the Israelites, who came to Southern India and took refuge with us in the very year in which their holy temple was shattered to pieces by Roman tyranny. I am proud to belong to the religion which has sheltered and is still fostering the remnant of the grand Zoroastrian nation. I will quote to you, brethren, a few lines from a hymn which I remember to have repeated from my earliest boyhood, which is every day repeated by millions of human beings: "*As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee.*"

The present convention, which is one of the most august assemblies ever held, is in itself a vindication, a declaration to the world of the wonderful doctrine preached in the Gita: "*Whosoever comes to Me, through whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to Me.*" Sectarianism, bigotry, and its horrible descendant, fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilization and sent whole nations to despair. Had it not been for these horrible demons, human society would be far more advanced than it is now. But their time is come; and I fervently hope that the bell that tolled this morning in honour of this convention may be the death-knell of all fanaticism, of all persecution with the sword or with the pen, and of all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal.

[From *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*
(Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1977), 1:3-4.]

MAN IS GOD

In his series of lectures entitled “Practical Vedanta,” delivered in London in 1896, Vivekananda set forth the teachings of his master, Ramakrishna. The central point of his message was that God is within man; in his inmost being, man is God.

I shall call you religious from the day you begin to see God in men and women and then you will understand what is meant by turning the left cheek to the man who strikes you on the right. When you see man as God, everything, even the tiger, will be welcome. Whatever comes to you is but the Lord, the Eternal, the Blessed One, appearing to us in various forms, as our father, and mother, and friend, and child; they are our own soul playing with us.

As our human relationships can thus be made divine so our relationship with God may take any of these forms and we can look upon Him as our father or mother or friend or beloved. Calling God Mother is a higher idea than calling Him Father, and to call Him Friend is still higher, but the highest is to regard Him as the Beloved. The highest point of all is to see no difference between lover and beloved. You may remember, perhaps, the old Persian story, of how a lover came and knocked at the door of the beloved and was asked: “Who are you?” He answered: “It is I,” and there was no response. A second time he came, and exclaimed: “I am here,” but the door was not opened. The third time he came, and the voice asked from inside: “Who is there?” He replied: “I am thyself, my beloved,” and the door opened. So is the relation between God and ourselves. He is in everything, He is everything. Every man and woman is the palpable, blissful, living God.

[From *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*
(Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, 1976), 2:326–327.]

IMAGE WORSHIP HAS A PLACE

In contrast to some of the more extreme religious reformers of his day, Vivekananda allowed a place for the worship of images.

This external worship of images has, however, been described in all our Shastras as the lowest of all the low forms of worship. But that does not mean that it is a wrong thing to do. Despite the many iniquities that have found entrance into the practices of image-worship as it is in vogue now, I do not condemn it. Aye, where would I have been, if I had not been blessed with the dust of the holy feet of that orthodox, image-worshipping Brahmana [Ramakrishna]!

Those reformers who preach against image-worship, or what they denounce as idolatry—to them I say: “Brothers! If you are fit to worship God-without-Form discarding any external help, do so, but why do you condemn others who cannot do the same?”

[From *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*
(Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, 1960), 3:460.]

THE KINDERGARTENS OF RELIGION

Because of his colonial context and international connections, Vivekananda often wrote or spoke on Christianity. While he felt that in Jesus's message there were hints of the truth of Advaitic wisdom, he also identified much of Christian teaching with lower forms of religion. Thus there is a certain triumphalism in his teaching about other religions: all lead to the same goal, but some lead faster than others.

Christ said, "I and my father are one," and you repeat it. Yet it has not helped mankind. For nineteen hundred years men have not understood that saying. They make Christ the savior of men. He is God and we are worms! Similarly in India. In every country, this sort of belief is the backbone of every sect. For thousands of years millions and millions all over the world have been taught to worship the Lord of this world, the Incarnations, the saviors, the prophets. They have been taught to consider themselves helpless, miserable creatures and to depend upon the mercy of some person or persons for salvation. There are no doubt many marvelous things in such belief. But even at their best, they are but kindergartens of religion, and they have helped but little. Men are still hypnotized into abject degradation. However, there are some strong souls who get over that illusion. The hour comes when great men shall arise and cast off these kindergartens of religion and shall make vivid and powerful the true religion, the worship of the spirit by the spirit.

[From Swami Vivekananda, "Is Vedanta the Future Religion?"
in *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*
(Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, 1971), 8:141.]

VIVEKANANDA AND HIS MASTER

In these unusual reflections penned after Ramakrishna's death in 1886, Vivekananda recounts what he went through after his master died, and describes his sense of growing dependence upon Sharada Devi, Ramakrishna's saintly wife.

Now, I happened to get an old man to teach me, and he was very peculiar. He did not go much for intellectual scholarship, scarcely studied books; but when he was a boy he was seized with the tremendous idea of getting truth direct. First he tried by studying his own religion. Then he got the idea that he must get the truth of other religions and with that idea he joined all the sects, one after another. . . . He came to the conclusion that they were all good. He had no criticism to offer to any one; they are all so many paths leading to the same goal. . . .

Now, all the ideas that I preach are only an attempt to echo his ideas. [And] there at his feet I conceived these ideas—there with some other young men. I was just a boy. I went there when I was about sixteen. . . .

Then came the sad day when our old teacher died. We nursed him the best we could. We had no friends. Who would listen to a few boys, with their crank notions? . . .

Then came a terrible time—for me personally and for all the other boys as well. But to me came such misfortune! On the one side was my mother, my brothers. My father died at that time, and we were left poor. Oh very poor, almost starving all the time! I was the only hope of the family, the only one who could do anything to help them. I had to stand between my two worlds. On the one hand, I would have to see my mother and brothers starve unto death; on the other, I have believed that this man's ideas were for the good of India and the world, and had to be preached and worked out. And as the fight went on in my mind for days and months. . . . Who would sympathize with me? None—except one.

The one's sympathy brought blessing and hope. She was a woman. Our teacher, this great monk, was married when he was a boy and she a mere child. . . . Later, when the man had become a great spiritual giant, she came—really, she was the first disciple—and she spent the rest of her life taking care of the body of this man. . . . Well, that lady, his wife, was the only one who sympathized with the idea of those boys.

[From *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 8:79–82.]

THE ORIGINS, RATIONALE, AND DEGRADATION OF CASTE

In a farsighted essay called “The Future of India,” Vivekananda addressed what is now called the “Indigenous Aryan Debate.” Unlike the Brahmo reformers and Dayanand, but like Gandhi, Vivekananda justified the caste system in theory, while excoriating privileged people who oppress those at the bottom of the social ladder.

Then there is the other idea that the Shudra caste are surely the aborigines. . . . Our archaeologist dreams of India being full of dark-eyed aborigines, and the bright Aryans came from—the Lord knows where. According to some, they came from Central Tibet, others will have it that they came from Central Asia. There are patriotic Englishmen who think that the Aryans were all red-haired. Others, according to their idea, think that they were all black-haired. . . . Of late, there was an attempt made to prove that the Aryans lived on the Swiss Lakes. I should not be sorry if they had been all drowned there, theory and all. Some say now that they lived at the North Pole. Lord bless the Aryans and their habitations! As for the truth of these theories, there is not one word in all our scriptures, not one, to prove that the Aryans ever came from anywhere outside of India, and in ancient India was included Afghanistan. There it ends. And the theory that the Shudra caste were all non-Aryans and they were a multitude, is equally illogical and equally irrational. . . . The only explanation is to be found in the Mahabharata, which says that in the beginning of the Satya Yuga there was one

caste, the Brahmins, and then by difference of occupations they went on dividing themselves into different castes. . . .

The solution of the caste problem in India, therefore, assumes this form, not to degrade the higher castes, not to crush the Brahmins. . . . It is no use fighting among the castes, what good will it do? It will divide us all the more, weaken us all the more, degrade us all the more. The days of exclusive privileges and exclusive claims are done, gone forever from the soil of India, and it is one of the great blessings of the British Rule in India. Even to the Mohammedan Rule we owe that great blessing, the destruction of exclusive privilege. . . .

The solution is not by bringing down the higher, but by raising the lower up to the level of the higher. And that is the line of work that is found in all our books.

[From *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 3:292–294, 295.]

INDIA AND THE WEST

Vivekananda developed the idea put forth by Keshab that India should take practical knowledge from Europe, and in exchange teach religious wisdom to the world. Lectures on this theme, such as the following one delivered in Madras, instilled self-confidence in Indian youth, thus contributing to the later movement for national independence.

This is the great ideal before us, and every one must be ready for it—the conquest of the whole world by India—nothing less than that, and we must all get ready for it, strain every nerve for it. Let foreigners come and flood the land with their armies, never mind. Up, India, and conquer the world with your spirituality! . . . Heroic workers are wanted to go abroad and help to disseminate the great truths of the Vedanta. The world wants it; without it the world will be destroyed. . . . Now is the time to work so that India's spiritual ideas may penetrate deep into the West. Therefore, young men of Madras, I specially ask you to remember this. We must go out, we must conquer the world through our spirituality and philosophy. There is no other alternative, we must do it or die. The only condition of national life, of awakened and vigorous national life, is the conquest of the world by Indian thought.

[From *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 3:276–277.]

MODERN INDIA

In one of his last essays, written in Bengali in 1899, Vivekananda declared India's independence of Western standards. Deriding blind imitation of foreign models as unmanly, he called on his compatriots to take pride in their past and to unite rich and poor, high and low castes, in order to make their nation strong.

O India, this is your terrible danger. The spell of imitating the West is getting such a strong hold upon you, that what is good or what is bad is no longer decided by reason, judgment, discrimination, or reference to the Shastras. Whatever ideas, whatever manners the white men praise or like, are good; whatever things they dislike or censure are bad! Alas! What can be a more tangible proof of foolishness than this?

The Western ladies move freely everywhere—therefore, that is good; they choose for themselves their husbands—therefore, that is the highest step of advancement; the Westerners disapprove of our dress, decorations, food, and ways of living—therefore, they must be very bad; the Westerners condemn image-worship as sinful—surely then, image-worship is the greatest sin, there is no doubt of it!

The Westerners say that worshiping a single Deity is fruitful of the highest spiritual good—therefore, let us throw our Gods and Goddesses into the river Ganges! The Westerners hold caste distinctions to be obnoxious—therefore, let all the different castes be jumbled into one! The Westerners say that child-marriage is the root of all evils—therefore, that is also very bad, of a certainty it is! . . .

Thou brave one, be bold, take courage, be proud that thou art an Indian, and proudly proclaim: “I am an Indian, every Indian is my brother.” Say: “The ignorant Indian, the poor and destitute Indian, the Brāhman Indian, the Pariah Indian, is my brother.” Thou too clad with but a rag round thy loins proudly proclaim at the top of thy voice: “The Indian is my brother, the Indian is my life, India’s gods and goddesses are my God, India’s society is the cradle of my infancy, the pleasure-garden of my youth, the sacred heaven, the Vārānasi, of my old age.” Say, brother: “The soil of India is my highest heaven, the good of India is my good,” and repeat and pray day and night: “O Thou Lord of Gauri, O Thou Mother of the Universe, vouchsafe manliness unto me! O Thou Mother of Strength, take away my weakness, take away my unmanliness, and—Make me a Man!”

[From *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*
(Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, 1978), 4:478, 480.]

SIR SAYYID AHMAD KHAN: ENLIGHTENED ISLAM IN A BRITISH CONTEXT

As we have seen in chapter 2, Sayyid Ahmad’s strategy for ameliorating the lot of the Muslim community in India, especially after they had been (unfairly) singled out as great rebels and severely repressed, was twofold: to persuade the British that the Muslims of India were loyal and worthy of help, and to teach his own community that they would only benefit by cooperating with and learning from the West. He managed to achieve both aims in some degree, but the first more easily than the second. Even though several high officials (including a viceroy) were assassinated by Muslims in the

1860s and 1870s, Sayyid Ahmad's educational initiatives quickly won British support. After founding several schools, a "scientific society" for promoting the translation of modern Western knowledge into Urdu, and a weekly magazine printed with English and Urdu in facing columns, he took leave from his judicial work in order to see England for himself (and to enter his son into Cambridge). He was well received, found himself much impressed, and stayed for seventeen months, developing plans to found a college modeled after Harrow and Cambridge but where both Islamic and modern Western studies could be offered. In 1875, before retiring from government service, he opened a school on these lines, the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh. For the next two decades, Sayyid Ahmad remained the heart and soul of his new creation, while delegating its administration to a series of British educators. Muslim students came from all parts of India to enroll, and Hindu students were also welcomed and their dietary customs respected. Sir Sayyid's chief concern was with educating young men from *sharif*, or upper-class, families. Well-off young Hindus were encouraged to attend the college, but no attempt was made to reach out to Muslims from poor families; nor did the Aligarh plan include education for women. In these exclusions Sir Sayyid was no different from most reformers of this early period, even in Bengal.

Some orthodox Muslims objected to the college on the grounds that Sayyid Ahmad had gone too far in accepting Western ideas and ways of living. But what particularly disturbed them was his interpretation of Islam, set forth in various lectures and in his series of essays on the *Quran* (1876–1891). Rejecting the authority of traditional scholars, and of the sayings (hadith) attributed to the Prophet, Muhammad, Sir Sayyid relied on his own judgment as he examined and compared the actual words in the *Quran* itself. Further, in his enthusiasm for the progress of the natural sciences, he declared that nothing in the *Quran*, when rightly understood, contradicted the laws of nature. Some scholars in later generations have seen him as a pioneer in using independent experience and judgment to arrive at a truer understanding of the words that came into the heart of the Prophet; indeed, with the exception of certain contemporaries in Egypt, who also produced seminal thought along these lines, Sir Sayyid's modernist originality was unprecedented for his time. To ensure the success of his college, Sayyid Ahmad carefully kept his own theological views out of its curriculum, made sure that both Sunni and Shia instruction was offered, and required Muslim students to pray facing toward Mecca five times each day.

In the final years of his life, Sayyid Ahmad broadened the scope of his efforts to serve and defend the interests of the Muslims of India, founding in 1886 the annual Muhammadan Educational Conference and in 1888 the United India Patriotic Association. He urged both Muslims and (secondarily) Hindus to boycott the newly formed Indian National Congress, in part because he felt that its antigovernment agitation would turn Muslims away from the modern Western learning that was essential to their progress. He also feared subjection to the will of the Hindu majority, and hence was wary of Congress attempts to wrest concessions, and perhaps eventually power, from the British. Muslims at that time formed only 20 percent of India's population; in education, wealth, and positions in the government service they had fallen

far behind Hindus. Because of his call to boycott the Congress, Sir Sayyid has been seen as a forefather of the movement to establish the Muslim-majority movement for Pakistan. In addition, Muslims both there and in India claim him as the father of their modern outlook on education—and to some extent on religion as well.

LESSONS FROM LONDON

Sir Sayyid spent a total of seventeen months in England, in 1869–1870. Below are some of his reminiscences.

It is nearly six months since I arrived in London, and . . . although I do not absolve the English in India of discourtesy, and of looking upon the natives of that country as animals and beneath contempt, I think they do so from not understanding us; and I am afraid I must confess that they are not far wrong in their opinion of us. Without flattering the English, I can truly say that the natives of India, high and low, merchants and petty shopkeepers, educated and illiterate, when contrasted with the English in education, manners, and uprightness, are as like them as a dirty animal is to an able and handsome man. The English have reason for believing us in India to be imbecile brutes. Although my countrymen will consider this opinion of mine an extremely harsh one, and will wonder what they are deficient in, and in what the English excel, to cause me to write as I do, I maintain that they have no cause for wonder, as they are ignorant of everything here, which is really beyond imagination and conception. . . . I am not thinking about those things in which, owing to the specialties of our respective countries, we and the English differ. I only remark on politeness, knowledge, good faith, cleanliness, skilled workmanship, accomplishments, and thoroughness, which are the results of education and civilisation. All good things, spiritual and worldly, which should be found in man, have been bestowed by the Almighty on Europe, and especially on England. By spiritual good things I mean that the English carry out all the details of the religion which they believe to be the true one, with a beauty and excellence which no other nation can compare with. This is entirely due to the education of the men and women, and to their being united in aspiring after this beauty and excellence. If Hindustanis can only attain to civilisation, it will probably, owing to its many excellent natural powers, become, if not the superior, at least the equal of England. . . .

The cause of England's civilisation is that all the arts and sciences are in the language of the country. . . . Those who are really bent on improving and bettering India must remember that the only way of compassing this is by having the whole of the arts and sciences translated into their own language. I should like to have this written in gigantic letters on the Himalayas, for the remembrance of future generations. If they be not translated, India can never be civilised. This is [the] truth, this is the truth, this is the truth!

[From G. F. I. Graham, *Life and Work of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1974), 125–127, 132.]

*THE IMPORTANCE OF MODERN
WESTERN EDUCATION*

As in Japan, China, and other countries, so too in nineteenth-century India was the introduction of modern Western education strongly resisted by those in charge of transmitting and interpreting the received teachings of their ancestors. Sayyid Ahmad insisted, as did his counterparts in other societies, that the new knowledge from abroad must be absorbed, not only to prevent the obliteration of his people and their culture, but also to enable the deepest truths of that culture to shine forth more brightly than before.

I have been accused by people, who do not understand, of being disloyal to the culture of Islam, even to Islam itself. There are men who say that I have become a Christian. All this I have drawn upon myself because I advocate the introduction of a new system of education which will not neglect the Islamic basis of our culture, nor, for that matter, the teaching of Islamic theology itself, but which will surely take account of the changed conditions in this land. Today there are no Muslim rulers to patronize those who are well versed in the old Arabic and Persian learning. The new rulers insist upon a knowledge of their language for all advancement in their services and in some of the independent professions like practising law as well. If the Muslims do not take to the system of education introduced by the British, they will not only remain a backward community but will sink lower and lower until there will be no hope of recovery left to them. Is this at all a pleasing prospect? Can we serve the cause of Islam in this way? Shall we then be able to ward off the obliteration of all that we hold dear for any length of time? . . .

The adoption of the new system of education does not mean the renunciation of Islam. It means its protection. We are justly proud of the achievements of our forefathers in the fields of learning and culture. We should, however, remember that these achievements were possible only because they were willing to act upon the teachings of the Prophet upon whom be peace and blessings of God. He said that knowledge is the heritage of the believer, and that he should acquire it wherever he can find it. He also said that the Muslims should seek knowledge even if they have to go to China to find it. . . . Did the early Muslims not take to Greek learning avidly? Did this in any respect undermine their loyalty to Islam?

It is not only because the British are today our rulers, and we have to recognize this fact if we are to survive, that I am advocating the adoption of their system of education, but also because Europe has made such remarkable progress in science that it would be suicidal not to make an effort to acquire it. Already the leeway between our knowledge and that of Europe is too great. If we go on with our present obstinacy in neglecting it, we shall be left far behind. How can we remain true Muslims or serve Islam, if we sink into ignorance? The knowledge of yesterday is often the ignorance of tomorrow, because knowledge and ignorance are, in this context, comparative terms. The truth of Islam will

shine the more brightly if its followers are well educated, familiar with the highest in the knowledge of the world; it will come under an eclipse if its followers are ignorant and backward.

The Muslims have nothing to fear from the adoption of the new education if they simultaneously hold steadfast to their faith, because Islam is not irrational superstition; it is a rational religion which can march hand in hand with the growth of human knowledge. Any fear to the contrary betrays lack of faith in the truth of Islam.

[From a letter to Maulvi Tasadduq Husain, in Khan,
Sir Sayyid ke chand nadir khutut, compiled
by Ahmad Husain Yaqubi (Meerut: Namdar, 1900).]

HINDU—MUSLIM PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE POSSIBLE ONLY UNDER BRITISH RULE

Speaking from personal knowledge of the hostilities between Hindus and Muslims during the breakdown of order caused by the Rebellion of 1857, and fearing that even greater troubles would occur if the British were to leave India to govern herself, Sayyid Ahmad Khan vigorously opposed the nationalist aims of the Indian National Congress (founded in 1885). Maximum progress, he believed, could be achieved only through harmonious relations between Muslims and Hindus, during the course of prolonged British rule. These two excerpts derive from speeches given in Patna in 1883 and Meerut in 1888.

Gentlemen, just as many reputed people professing Hindu faith came to this country, so we also came here. The Hindus forgot the country from which they had come; they could not remember their migration from one land to another and came to consider India as their homeland, believing that their country lies between the Himalayas and the Vindhya-chal. Hundreds of years have lapsed since we, in our turn, left the lands of our origin. We remember neither the climate nor the natural beauty of those lands, neither the freshness of the harvests nor the deliciousness of the fruits, nor even do we remember the blessings of the holy deserts. We also come to consider India as our homeland and we settled down here like the earlier immigrants. Thus India is the home of both of us. We both breathe the air of India and take the water of the holy Ganges and the Jamuna. We both consume the products of the Indian soil. We are living and dying together. By living so long in India, the blood of both have changed. The colour of both have become similar. The faces of both, having changed, have become similar. The Muslims have acquired hundreds of customs from the Hindus and the Hindus have also learned hundreds of things from the Muslims. We mixed with each other so much that we produced a new language—Urdu, which was neither our language nor theirs. . . . My friends, I have repeatedly said and say it again that India is like a bride which has got two beautiful and

lustrous eyes—Hindus and Mussulmans. If they quarrel against each other that beautiful bride will become ugly and if one destroys the other, she will lose one eye. Therefore, people of Hindustan you have now the right to make this bride either squint eyed or one eyed.

[From Ahmed Khan, *Writings and Speeches*, ed. S. Muhammad (Bombay: Nachiketa, 1972), 159–160.]

Now, suppose that the English are not in India and that one of the nations of India has conquered the other, whether the Hindus the Mohammedans, or the Mohammedans the Hindus. At once some other nation of Europe, such as the French, the Germans, the Portuguese, or the Russians, will attack India. Their ships of war, covered with iron and loaded with flashing cannon and weapons, will surround her on all sides. At that time who will protect India? Neither Hindus can save nor Mohammedans; neither the Rajputs nor my brave brothers the Pathans. And what will be the result? The result will be this—that foreigners will rule India, because the state of India is such that if foreign powers attack her, no one has the power to oppose them. From this reasoning it follows of necessity that an empire, not of any Indian race, but of foreigners, will be established in India. Now, will you please decide which of the nations of Europe you would like to rule over India? I ask if you would like Germany, whose subjects weep for heavy taxation and the stringency of their military service? Would you like the rule of France? Stop! I fancy you would, perhaps, like the rule of the Russians, who are very great friends of India and of Mohammedans, and under whom the Hindus will live in great comfort, and who will protect with the tenderest care the wealth and property which they have acquired under English rule? (*Laughter*). Everybody knows something or other about these powerful kingdoms of Europe. Everyone will admit that their governments are far worse, nay, beyond comparison worse, than the British Government. It is, therefore, necessary that for the peace of India and for the progress of everything in India the English Government should remain for many years—in fact for ever!

[From Ahmed Khan, *Writings and Speeches*, 185–186.]

AMIR ALI AND “THE SPIRIT OF ISLAM”

Sayyid Amir Ali (1849–1928) was one of the first Muslims in India to receive an English education. He studied at Hooghly College, outside Calcutta, from which he graduated in 1867; he went on to study law in London, returning to India in 1873 and practicing at the Calcutta High Court. He also became a lecturer in Islamic law at Presidency College, and later a professor of law at Calcutta University. In 1890 he was appointed a judge in the Calcutta High Court; in 1903 he retired, and settled in England. In 1910 he founded the first mosque ever built in London.

He was not only a jurist and legal scholar, but also a prolific author who aimed to explicate Islam—and especially Shiism, his personal faith—along rational and mod-

ernist lines. All his works were in English; he knew the language excellently, and had a thoughtful and sophisticated literary style. His first book, written when he was only twenty-four and still studying in London, was *A Critical Examination of the Life and Teachings of Mohammed* (1873). Later works dealt with such topics as Muslim personal law (1880), ethics (1893), and the legal position of women (1912). Of all his works, the most famous is *The Spirit of Islam* (1923). In it he seeks, as he says, to “be of help to wanderers in quest of a constructive faith to steady the human mind.”¹⁰ After an account of the Prophet’s life, he offers an overview of the history of the faith, including an account of its sectarian divisions. He also provides a historical and theological account of issues like religious militancy, slavery, and the status of women. His final chapters address the “literary and scientific spirit,” the “rationalistic and philosophical spirit,” and the “idealistic and mystical spirit” of Islam. Often reprinted, the book is still available today.

ISLAM AS AN ETHICAL SPIRIT THAT IS BENEFICIAL FOR WOMEN

In a number of books, including *The Spirit of Islam*, he presented an interpretation, central to modernist Muslim thought, of Islam as a rationalizing force, and as a humane, sensible, modern faith compatible with Western ideas and Christian values.

The success of Islām in the seventh century of the Christian era, and its rapid and marvellous diffusion over the surface of the globe, were due to the fact that it recognised this essential need of human nature. To a world of wrangling sects, and creeds, to whom words were of far greater importance than practice, it spoke in terms of positive command from an Absolute Source. Amidst the moral and social wreck in which it found its birth, it aimed at the integration of the worship of a Personal Will, and thereby to recall humanity to the observance of duty which alone pointed to the path of spiritual development. And by its success in lifting up the lower races to a higher level of social morality it proved to the world the need of a positive system. It taught them sobriety, temperance, charity, justice and equality as the commandments of God. Its affirmation of the principle of equality of man and man and its almost socialistic tendency represented the same phase of thought that had found expression on the shores of Galilee. But even in his most exalted mood the great Teacher of Islām did not forget the limitations imposed on individual capacity which occasion economic inequalities.

Alas for the latter-day professors of Islām! The blight of patristicism has ruined the blossom of true religion and a true devotional spirit.

A Christian preacher has pointed out with great force the distinction between religion and theology, and the evils which have followed in his Church from the confusion of the two. What has happened in Christianity has happened in Islām. Practice has given way to the mockery of profession, ceremonialism has taken the place of earnest and faithful work,—doing good to mankind for the sake of doing good, and for the love of God. Enthusiasm has died out, and devo-

tion to God and His Prophet are meaningless words. The earnestness without which human existence is no better than that of the brute creation, earnestness in right-doing and right-thinking, is absent. The Moslems of the present day have ignored the spirit in a hopeless love for the letter. Instead of living up to the ideal preached by the Master, instead of "striving to excel in good works," "of being righteous"; instead of loving God, and for the sake of His love loving His creatures,—they have made themselves the slaves of opportunism and outward observance. It was natural that in their reverence and admiration for the Teacher his early disciples should stereotype his ordinary mode of life, crystallise the passing incidents of a chequered career, imprint on the heart orders, rules, and regulations enunciated for the common exigencies of the day in an infant society. But to suppose that the greatest Reformer the world has ever produced, the greatest upholder of the sovereignty of Reason, the man who proclaimed that the universe was governed and guided by law and order, and that the law of nature meant progressive development, ever contemplated that even those injunctions which were called forth by the passing necessities of a semi-civilised people should become immutable to the end of the world, is doing an injustice to the Prophet of Islām.

No one had a keener perception than he of the necessities of this world of progress with its ever-changing social and moral phenomena, nor of the likelihood that the revelations vouchsafed to him might not meet all possible contingencies. When Muāz was appointed as governor of Yemen, he was asked by the Prophet by what rule he would be guided in his administration of that province. "By the law of the Koran," said Muāz. "But if you find no direction therein?" "Then I will act according to the example of the Prophet." "But if that fails?" "Then I will exercise my own judgment." The Prophet approved highly of the answer of his disciple, and commended it to the other delegates. . . .

The present stagnation of the Musulman communities is principally due to the notion which has fixed itself on the minds of the generality of Moslems, that the right to the exercise of private judgment ceased with the early legists, that its exercise in modern times is sinful, and that a Moslem in order to be regarded as an orthodox follower of Mohammed should belong to one or the other of the schools established by the schoolmen of Islām, and abandon his judgment absolutely to the interpretations of men who lived in the ninth century, and could have no conception of the necessities of the twentieth.

Among the Sunnis, it is the common belief that since the four Imāms, no doctor has arisen qualified to interpret the laws of the Prophet. No account is taken of the altered circumstances in which Moslems are now placed; the conclusions at which these learned legists arrived several centuries ago are held to be equally applicable to the present day. Among the Shiahs, the Akhbāri will not allow his judgment to travel beyond the dictates of "the expounders of the law." The Prophet had consecrated reason as the highest and noblest function of the human intellect. Our schoolmen and their servile followers have made its exercise a sin and a crime. . . .

In the Western world, the Reformation was ushered in by the Renaissance and the progress of Europe commenced when it threw off the shackles of Ecclesiasticism. In Islām also, enlightenment must precede reform; and, before there can be a renovation of religious life, the mind must first escape from the bondage which centuries of literal interpretation and the doctrine of "conformity" have imposed upon it. The formalism that does not appeal to the heart of the worshipper must be abandoned; externals must be subordinated to the inner feelings; and the lessons of ethics must be impressed on the plastic mind; then alone can we hope for that enthusiasm in the principles of duty taught by the Prophet of Islām. The reformation of Islām will begin when once it is recognised that divine words rendered into any language retain their divine character and that devotions offered in any tongue are acceptable to God. The Prophet himself had allowed his foreign disciples to say their prayers in their own tongue. He had expressly permitted others to recite the Koran in their respective dialects; and had declared that it was revealed in seven languages.

In the earliest ages of Islām there was a consensus of opinion that devotion without understanding was useless. Imām Abū Hanīfa considered the recitation of the *namāz* and also of the *Khutba* or sermon, lawful and valid in any language. The disciples of Abū Hanīfa, Abū Yusuf and Mohammed, have accepted the doctrine of their master with a certain variation. They hold that when a person does not know Arabic, he may validly offer his devotions in any other language.

There is, however, one great and cogent reason why the practice of reciting prayers in Arabic should be maintained wherever it is possible and practicable. Not because it was the language of the Prophet, but because it has become the language of Islām and maintains the unity of sentiment throughout the Islāmic world. And wherein lies more strength than in unity? . . .

The system of female seclusion undoubtedly possesses many advantages in the social well-being of unsettled and uncultured communities; and even in countries, where the diversity of culture and moral conceptions is great, a modified form of seclusion is not absolutely to be deprecated. . . . The Prophet of Islām found [*Purdah*] existing among the Persians and other Oriental communities; he perceived its advantages, and it is possible that, in view of the widespread laxity of morals among all classes of people, he recommended to the women-folk the observance of privacy. But to suppose that he ever intended his recommendation should assume its present inelastic form, or that he ever allowed or enjoined the *seclusion* of women, is wholly opposed to the spirit of his reforms. . . .

The improvement effected in the position of women by the Prophet of Arabia has been acknowledged by all unprejudiced writers, though it is still the fashion with bigoted controversialists to say the Islāmic system lowered the status of women. No falser calumny has been levelled at the great Prophet. . . . If Mohammed had done nothing more, his claim to be a benefactor of mankind would have been indisputable. Even under the laws as they stand at present in the pages of the legists, the legal position of Moslem females may be said to compare favourably with that of European women. . . . We shall . . . glance at the provisions

of the Moslem codes relating to women. As long as she is unmarried she remains under the parental roof, and until she attains her majority she is, to some extent, under the control of the father or his representative. As soon, however, as she is of age, the law vests in her all the rights which belong to her as an independent human being. She is entitled to share in the inheritance of her parents along with her brothers, and though the proportion is different, the distinction is founded on the relative position of brother and sister. A woman who is *sui juris* can under no circumstances be married without her own express consent, "not even by the sultan." . . . On her marriage she does not lose her individuality. She does not cease to be a separate member of society.

An ante-nuptial settlement by the husband in favour of the wife is a necessary condition, and on his failure to make a settlement the law presumes one in accordance with the social position of the wife. A Moslem marriage is a civil act, needing no priest, requiring no ceremonial. The contract of marriage gives the man no power over the woman's person, beyond what the law defines, and none whatever upon her goods and property. Her rights as a mother do not depend for their recognition upon the idiosyncrasies of individual judges. Her earnings acquired by her own exertions cannot be wasted by a prodigal husband, nor can she be ill-treated with impunity by one who is brutal. She acts, if *sui juris*, in all matters which relate to herself and her property in her own individual right, without the intervention of husband or father. She can sue her debtors in the open courts, without the necessity of joining a next friend, or under cover of her husband's name. She continues to exercise, after she has passed from her father's house into her husband's home, all the rights which the law gives to men. All the privileges which belong to her as a woman and a wife are secured to her, not by the courtesies which "come and go," but by the actual text in the book of law. Taken as a whole, her status is not more unfavourable than that of many European women, whilst in many respects she occupies a decidedly better position. Her comparatively backward condition is the result of a want of culture among the community generally, rather than of any special feature in the laws of the fathers.

[Syed Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam: A History of the Evolution and Ideals of Islam with a Life of the Prophet* (1923; Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1990), 181–187, 249, 255–259.]

MAHADEV GOVIND RANADE: PIONEER MAHARASHTRIAN REFORMER

Western cultural influence came, as did British rule itself, to different parts of India at different times. The coastal ports founded in the seventeenth century—Madras, Bombay, Calcutta—became (and remain today) the centers of new life and thought, although they are now called Chennai, Mumbai, and Kolkata. The spread of this network into the hinterland, however, was a slow and irregular process. Bengal, the home of a number of thinkers considered thus far, was the first province to fall entirely under British sway, and the first to react to the impact of Western ways and ideas.

On the opposite side of the Indian subcontinent, protected by their mountain fortresses in the Western Ghats, the regional Maratha kingdoms (not including Bombay, which was in British hands) were among the last to surrender to foreign rule. The leadership that made this prolonged resistance possible came notably from two caste groups. The fighting Maratha-Kunbi castes under Shivaji (1630?–1680) and his descendants provided most of the military force, while the small but influential groups of Chitpavan Brahmans provided the peshwas (prime ministers) and the intellectual leaders of later times. Even after the final defeat of the Peshwa's government in 1818, the town of Poona remained the center of Maharashtrian intellectual life. In the closing decades of the nineteenth century, the Chitpavan Brahmans produced three nationalist leaders of deserved fame—Ranade, Gokhale, and Tilak.

Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842–1901), the eldest of three children, was born into a strictly orthodox household. He initially became a teacher of economics, history, and literature at Bombay University, but then chose to make his career in law. Before he was thirty he had received his first appointment as a subordinate judge in the government courts at Poona.

During his thirty years as a judge, Ranade gently but firmly worked for the reform of such social evils as child marriage, seclusion of women, and restrictions on the lives of widows (including prohibitions against their remarriage). In many ways his efforts resembled those of Rammohan Roy, whom he admired as a patriot and godly man. Ranade was one of the early members of the Prarthana Samaj (Prayer Society, modeled after the Brahmo Samaj), the founding of which (1867) was sparked by Keshab Chandra Sen's visits to Bombay. Under Ranade's guidance the Prarthana Samaj did not cut itself off from Hindu society, but strove gradually to bring the orthodox around to its position. Despite the vociferous and even violent opposition of Tilak and his school, Ranade's moderate social reform policies met with increasing success.

Since he was disqualified from entering active politics by his judgeship, Ranade's contribution to the nationalist movement was largely in the realm of social and economic reform. In 1887 he founded the Indian National Social Conference as a separate organization that met concurrently with the annual Congress sessions. He concluded that the constructive solution to India's problems lay in a vigorous policy of industrial and commercial development under British government auspices.

Ranade was a Moderate in the best sense of the term— scholarly, patient, practical, constructive, never wasting his time in denouncing those who held other views. After his death in 1901 his memory continued to inspire the leaders of western India— Gokhale and, after him, Gandhi, who both carried on the tradition he began, and saw social and economic reform as an integral part of selfless public service.

REVIVALISM VERSUS REFORM

The impracticability of reviving ancient traditions merely because they are ancient was tellingly demonstrated by Ranade in his 1897 Social Conference address. Having explained why he rejected the suggestion of the Brahmo and Arya Samajists that all

social reformers convert to those faiths, he went on to analyze the four basic causes of India's degeneration.

While the new religious sects condemn us for being too orthodox, the extreme orthodox section denounce us for being too revolutionary in our methods. According to these last, our efforts should be directed to revive, and not to reform. . . . They advocate a return to the old ways, and appeal to the old authorities and the old sanction. . . . [But] what particular period of our history is to be taken as the old? Whether the period of the Vedas, of the Smritis, of the Puranas or of the Mahomedan or modern Hindu times? . . . Shall we revive the old habits of our people when the most sacred of our caste indulged in all the abominations as we now understand them of animal food and drink which exhausted every section of our country's zoology and botany? The men and the gods of those old days ate and drank forbidden things to excess in a way no revivalist will now venture to recommend. Shall we revive the twelve forms of sons, or eight forms of marriage, which included capture, and recognized mixed and illegitimate intercourse? Shall we revive the Niyoga system of procreating sons on our brother's wives when widowed? Shall we revive the old liberties taken by the Rishis and by the wives of the Rishis with the marital tie? Shall we revive the hecatombs of animals sacrificed from year's end to year's end, and in which human beings were not spared as propitiatory offerings? Shall we revive the Shakti worship of the left hand with its indecencies and practical debaucheries? Shall we revive the sati and infanticide customs, or the flinging of living men into the rivers, or over rocks, or hookswinging, or the crushing beneath Jagannath car? Shall we revive the internecine wars of the Brahmins and Kshatriyas, or the cruel persecution and degradation of the aboriginal population? . . . These instances will suffice to show that the plan of reviving the ancient usages and customs will not work our salvation, and is not practicable. . . . If revival is impossible, reformation is the only alternative open to sensible people, and now it may be asked what is the principle on which this reformation must be based? . . . It is not the outward form, but the inward form, the thought and the idea which determines the outward form, that has to be changed if real reformation is desired.

Now what have been the inward forms or ideas which have been hastening our decline during the past three thousand years? These ideas may be briefly set forth as isolation, submission to outward force or power more than to the voice of the inward conscience, perception of fictitious differences between men and men due to heredity and birth, passive acquiescence in evil or wrong doing, and a general indifference to secular well-being, almost bordering upon fatalism. These have been the root ideas of our ancient social system. They have as their natural result led to the existing family arrangements where the woman is entirely subordinated to the man and the lower castes to the higher castes, to the length of depriving men of their natural respect for humanity. All the evils we seek to combat result from the prevalence of these ideas. They are mere corol-

laries to these axiomatic assumptions. They prevent some of our people from realizing what they really are in all conscience, neither better nor worse than their fellows, and that whatever garb men may put on, they are the worse for assuming dignities and powers which do not in fact belong to them. As long as these ideas remain operative on our minds, we may change our outward forms and institutions, and be none the better for the change. . . . In place of isolation, we must cultivate the spirit of fraternity or elastic expansiveness. . . . Every caste and every sect has a tendency to split itself into smaller castes and smaller sects in practical life. . . . Now all this must be changed. The new mold of thought on this head must be, as stated above, cast on the lines of fraternity, a capacity to expand outwards, and to make more cohesive inwards the bonds of fellowship. Increase the circle of your friends and associates, slowly and cautiously if you will, but the tendency must be towards a general recognition of the essential equality between man and man. . . .

The next idea which lies at the root of our helplessness is the sense that we are always intended to remain children, to be subject to outside control and never to rise to the dignity of self-control by making our conscience and our reason the supreme, if not the sole, guide to our conduct. All past history has been a terrible witness to the havoc committed by this misconception. . . . Now the new idea which should take up the place of this helplessness and dependence is not the idea of a rebellious overthrow of all authority, but that of freedom responsible to the voice of God in us. Great and wise men in the past, as in the present, have a claim upon our regards, but they must not come between us and our God—the Divine principle enthroned in the heart of every one of us high or low. . . .

Similarly, . . . heredity and birth explain many things, but this Law of Karma does not explain all things! What is worse, it does not explain the mystery that makes man and woman what they really are, the reflection and the image of God. Our passions and our feelings, our pride and our ambition, lend strength to these agencies, and with their help the Law of Karma completes our conquest, and in too many cases enforces our surrender. The new idea that should come in here is that this Law of Karma can be controlled and set back by a properly trained will, when it is made subservient to a higher will than ours. . . .

The fourth old form or idea to which I will allude here is our acquiescence in wrong or evil doing as an inevitable condition of human life, about which we need not be very particular. All human life is a vanity and a dream, and we are not much concerned with it. This view of life is in fact atheism in its worst form. . . . It is the beast in us which blinds us to impurity and vice, and makes them even attractive. There must be nautches¹¹ in our temples, say our priests, because even the Gods cannot do without these impure fairies. This is only a typical instance of our acquiescence in impurity. There must be drunkenness in the world, there must be poverty and wretchedness and tyranny, there must be fraud and force, there must be thieves and the law to punish them. No doubt these are facts, and there is no use denying their existence, but in the name of

all that is sacred and true, do not acquiesce in them, do not hug these evils to your bosom, and cherish them. Their contact is poisonous, not the less deadly because it does not kill, but it corrupts men. A healthy sense of the true dignity of our nature, and of man's high destiny, is the best corrective and antidote to this poison. . . .

Now this is the work of the Reformer. Reforms in the matter of infant marriage and enforced widowhood, in the matter of temperance and purity, intermarriage between castes, the elevation of the low castes, and the readmission of converts, and the regulation of our endowments and charities, are reforms only so far and no further as they check the influence of the old ideas and promote the growth of the new tendencies. The Reformer has to infuse in himself the light and warmth of nature, and he can only do it by purifying and improving himself and his surroundings. He must have his family, village, tribe, and nation recast in other and new molds, and that is the reason why Social Reform becomes our obligatory duty, and not a mere pastime which might be given up at pleasure.

[From C. Y. Chintamani, ed., *Indian Social Reform*
(Madras: Thompson, 1901), 2:89–90, 91–93, 94–95.]

JOTIRAO PHULE: RADICAL REFORMER

It is hard to call Jotirao Phule (1827–1890) a reformer and not a revolutionary, since he wanted to overturn the entire Indian caste and economic order. But he also wanted to work within the framework of the British Raj, to which he gave a positive nod; thus it may be appropriate to call him a radical reformer. His powerful energy, courage, and intelligence attracted considerable attention during the second half of the nineteenth century in western India. Born into the low-caste Mali community in Maharashtra, he attended a missionary school, and came into contact with a circle of young men critical of traditional society and religion. Influenced not only by missionary views but also by the more radical ideas of writers like Thomas Paine (particularly “The Age of Reason”), Phule decided to become an educator; with his wife, he opened a school for girls from the lowest groups in society. Finding his program too radical, his own father turned him out. Phule continued to work for the education of women and of the lowest castes—including Untouchables, whom he called “atishudras.” He founded several more schools in the 1850s, including a night school for working people. In the 1860s he established a house for illegitimate children and their mothers, and challenged the caste order by opening the household water tank to Untouchables. In the next decade he helped found the Satyashodhak Samaj (“Truth-Seeking Society”), a radical reform organization; in pursuit of social change, he became a member of the Poona Municipal Council.

He also developed a penetrating critique of Brahman dominance over the lower castes as the main theme of Indian history from the time of the Aryan invasions to the present. He drew upon decades of polemics by non-Brahmans and missionaries, as well as the centuries-old bhakti traditions of Maharashtra in formulating his views.

Although he did not present a Marxist dialectic of class struggle, there are affinities. He assimilated all the lower castes—including Untouchables—into one large category of the oppressed, and insisted that they could only flourish if the extended dominance of the Brahmans at the top of the socioreligious order was overturned. As a monotheist of sorts, he rejected the traditional notions of karma, avatars, and the four *varnas*. He believed in the necessary destruction of the old to make way for the new, and in this process foreign missionaries and rulers were valuable allies. But he thought that the British had been misled by the Brahmans, and had allowed the latter to control the new educational order that was coming into being. Therefore he testified before the Hunter Commission on Education in 1882, pressing for educational institutions for the lower orders without Brahman teachers or Brahman control. His advocacy of more attention to primary education is being echoed more than a century later.

Although he did not himself convert to Christianity or Buddhism, as some other radical reformers did, Phule asserted the right of Pandita Ramabai to convert. He was one of her few defenders in Poona society. He was also active in supporting prohibition, widow remarriage, and the whole spectrum of reforms for women. He included all women, even those in the highest castes, as among the shudras and atishudras of Indian society, because of the oppression they had to endure.

THE TYRANNY OF A BRAHMAN-DOMINATED HISTORY

The selection below contains part of his critique of Indian society, in the preface to his book *Slavery*, which he dedicated to “the good people of the United States as a token of admiration for their sublime disinterested and self-sacrificing devotion in the cause of eradicating Negro Slavery; and with an earnest desire, that my countrymen may take their noble example as their guide in the emancipation of their Sudra brethren from the trammels of Brahmin thralldom.”

Recent researches have demonstrated beyond a shadow of doubt that the Brahmans were not the aborigines of India. At some remote period of antiquity, probably more than 3000 years ago, the Aryan progenitors of the present Brahmin Race descended upon the plains of Hindoo Koosh, and other adjoining tracts. According to Dr. Pritchard, the Ethnologist, they were an off-shoot of the Great Indo-European race, from whom the Persians, Medes, and other Iranian nations in Asia and the principal nations in Europe like-wise are descended. The affinity existing between the Zend, the Persian and Sanskrit languages, as also between all the European languages, unmistakably points to a common source of origin. It appears also more than probable that the original cradle of this race being an arid, sandy and mountainous region, and one ill calculated to afford them the sustenance which their growing wants required, they branched off into colonies, East and West. The extreme fertility of the soil in India, its rich productions, the proverbial wealth of its people, and the other innumerable gifts which this favoured land enjoys, and which have more recently tempted the cupidity

of the Western nations, no doubt, attracted the Aryans, who came to India, not as simple emigrants with peaceful intentions of colonization, but as conquerors. They appear to have been a race imbued with very high notions of self, extremely cunning, arrogant and bigoted. . . . The aborigines whom the Aryans subjugated, or displaced, appear to have been a hardy and brave people from the determined front which they offered to these interlopers. . . . From many customs . . . traditionally handed down to us, as well as from the mythological legends contained in the sacred books of the Brahmins, it is evident that there had been a hard struggle for ascendancy between the two races. The wars of Devas and Daityas, or the Rakshasas, about which so many fictions are found scattered over the sacred books of the Brahmins, have certainly a reference to this primeval struggle. . . .

This, in short, is the history of Brahmin domination in India. They originally settled on the banks of the Ganges whence they gradually spread over the whole of India. In order, however, to keep a better hold on the people they devised that weird system of mythology, the ordination of caste, and the code of cruel and inhuman laws, to which we can find no parallel amongst other nations. They founded a system of priestcraft so galling in its tendency and operation, the like of which we can hardly find anywhere since the times of the Druids. The institution of Caste, which has been the main object of their laws, had no existence among them originally. That it was an after-creation of their deep cunning is evident from their own writings. The highest rights, the highest privileges and gifts, and everything that would make the life of a Brahmin easy, smooth going and happy—everything that would conserve or flatter their self-pride,—were specially inculcated and enjoined, whereas the Sudras and Atisudras were regarded with supreme hatred and contempt, and the commonest rights of humanity were denied them. Their touch, nay, even their shadow, is deemed a pollution. They are considered as mere chattels, and their life of no more value than that of the meanest reptile . . . Happily for our Sudra brethren of the present day our enlightened British Rulers have not recognized these preposterous, inhuman and unjust penal enactments of the Brahmin legislators. They no doubt regard them more as ridiculous fooleries than as equitable laws. Indeed, no man possessing even a grain of common sense would regard them as otherwise. . . .

In the days of rigid Brahmin dominancy, so lately as that of the time of the Peshwa, my Sudra brethren had even greater hardships and oppression practised upon them than what even the slaves in America had to suffer. To this system of selfish superstition and bigotry, we are to attribute the stagnation and all the evils under which India has been groaning for many centuries past. It will, indeed, be difficult to name a single advantage which accrued to the aborigines from the advent of this intensely selfish and tyrannical sect. . . .

Under the guise of religion the Brahmin has his finger in every thing, big or small, which the Sudra undertakes. Go to his house, to his field or to the court to which business may invite him, the Brahmin is there under some specious

pretext or other, trying to squeeze out of him as much as his cunning and wily brain can manage. . . .

The Brahmin of the present time finds to some extent, like Othello, that his occupation is gone. But knowing full well this state of matters, is the Brahmin inclined to make atonement for his past selfishness? Perhaps, it would have been useless to repine over what has been suffered and what has passed away, had the present state been all that is desirable. We know perfectly well that the Brahmin will not descend from his self-raised high pedestal and meet his Coonbee¹² and low caste brethren on an equal footing without a struggle. Even the educated Brahmin who knows his exact position and how he has come by it, will not condescend to acknowledge the errors of his forefathers and willingly forego the long cherished false notions of his own superiority. At present, not one has the moral courage to do what only duty demands, and as long as this continues, one sect distrusting and degrading another sect, the condition of the Sudras will remain unaltered, and India never advance in greatness or prosperity.

Perhaps a part of the blame in bringing matters to this crisis may be justly laid to the credit of the Government. Whatever may have been their motives in providing ampler funds and greater facilities for higher education and neglecting that of the masses, it will be acknowledged by all that in justice to the latter this is not as it should be. It is an admitted fact that the greater portion of the revenues of the Indian Empire are derived from the Ryot's labour—from the sweat of his brow. The higher and richer classes contribute little or nothing to the state's exchequer. . . .

Perhaps the most glaring tendency of the Government system of high class education has been the virtual monopoly of all the higher offices under them by the Brahmins. If the welfare of the Ryot is at heart, if it is the duty of Government to check a host of abuses, it behoves them to narrow this monopoly, day by day, so as to allow a sprinkling of the other castes to get into the public service. Perhaps some might be inclined to say that it is not feasible in the present state of education. Our only reply is that if Government look a little less after higher education and more towards the education of the masses, the former being able to take care of itself, there would be no difficulty in training up a body of men every way qualified and perhaps far better in morals and manners.

My object in writing the present volume is not only to tell my Sudra brethren how they have been duped by the Brahmins, but also to open the eyes of Government to that pernicious system of high class education which has hitherto been so persistently followed and which statesmen like Sir George Campbell, the present Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, with broad and universal sympathies, are finding to be highly mischievous and pernicious to the interests of Government. I sincerely hope that Government will ere long see the error of their ways, trust less to writers or men who look through high class spectacles and take the glory into their own hands of emancipating my Sudra brethren from the trammels of bondage which the Brahmins have woven round them

like the coils of a serpent. It is no less the duty of such of my Sudra brethren as have received any education to place before Government the true state of their fellowmen and endeavour to the best of their power to emancipate themselves from Brahmin thralldom. Let there be schools for the Sudras in every village; but away with all Brahmin school-masters! The Sudras are the life and sinews of the country, and it is to them alone and not to the Brahmins that the Government must ever look to tide them over their difficulties, financial as well as political. If the hearts and minds of the Sudras are made happy and contented the British Government need have no fear for their loyalty in the future.

1st June, 1873 Joteerao Phooley

[From Phule, *Selected Writings of Jotirao Phule*, ed G. P. Deshpande (New Delhi: LeftWord, 2002), 27–28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34–35.]

LETTER TO MAHADEV GOVIND RANADE

On June 11, 1885, Phule wrote the following letter to M. G. Ranade, declining an invitation to a Marathi literary conference. He had little patience with meetings and organizations dominated by Brahmins, even one to be conducted by the widely respected Ranade.

Dear Sir,

I acknowledge the receipt of your letter regarding the proposed conference of the [Marathi] authors and I was delighted to receive your request that I should participate in the conference. But then esteemed sir, the conferences and the books of those who refuse to think of human rights generally, who do not concede them to others and going by their behaviour are unlikely to concede them in future, cannot make sense to us, they cannot concur with what we are trying to say in our books. The reason is that their ancestors, with a view to taking revenge on us, included in their pseudo-religious texts an account of how they turned us into slaves and thus gave our enslavement religious authority. Their dated and decadent texts are witness to this phenomenon. These upper-caste authors who are forever miles away from reality and who can only make ceremonial and meaningless speeches in big meetings can never understand what we the shudras and atishudras have to suffer and what calamities we have to undergo. All this is not entirely unknown to the high-caste founders of various conferences and organizations. They pretend to be modernists as long as they are in the service of the British government. The moment they retire and claim their pensions, they get into their brahmanical touch-me-not attire, become caste chauvinists, incorrigible idol worshippers and, what is worse, treat the shudras and atishudras as lowly and contemptible. If they happen to be in their touch-me-not ritual dress they would not

even touch paper notes as if that were a blasphemy! How can these Arya brahmans improve the lot of this unfortunate land? Be that as it may. We shudras do not any longer wish to trust these people and their specious and dishonest stories, for they cheat us and eat off our labour. In a word, we shudras have nothing to gain by mixing with such people. We must ourselves think about our situation and how we should relate to these upper-caste people. If these leaders of men are genuinely interested in unifying all people they must address themselves to the discovery of the root of eternal love of all human beings. Let them discover it and may be formulate and publish it as a text. Otherwise to turn a blind eye to the divisions among the human beings at this hour is simply futile. Of course, they are free to do what they like. I would nevertheless be thankful if my short letter is placed before your Conference for consideration. In any case accept the salute of this old man.

Your friend,

Jotirao G. Phule

[Letter to the Conference of Marathi Authors, trans. G. P. Deshpande,
from *Selected Writings of Jotirao Phule*, 200–201.]

PANDITA RAMABAI SARASVATI: PIONEERING FEMINIST AND REFORMER

Pandita Ramabai (1858–1922) was a remarkable Maharashtrian woman whose father, a Chitpavan Brahman, against the strictures of contemporary pandits, trained his second wife, and then an older daughter and son, in Sanskrit. After her parents and sister died in 1874, Ramabai and her brother made their way to Calcutta, where she began to display and use her learning. Her brother died in 1880; then her husband, a Bengali Shudra who was also a Christian, died in 1882. She went back to Maharashtra, and founded the Arya Mahila Samaj. In 1883 she traveled to Great Britain to seek aid for her work in helping destitute women, to learn English, and to become a doctor (she later changed her field to education). Given a home by the Wantage Sisters, she converted to Christianity. But feeling too constricted by them and the Church of England, she voyaged to the United States in 1886, where she met friendly women in Philadelphia who encouraged her to complete her powerful, polemical, and very successful book, *The High Caste Hindu Woman*. Touring the United States (1886–1888), she found women actively working in voluntary associations and committed to a variety of reforms. She also admired the industriousness of Americans, and their separation of church and state. All this inspired her to return to India to work energetically for the reform of her own society.

In India she was primarily concerned with the fate of degraded and abandoned women, who were also aided by Hindu reformers, including Ranade, but in addition she worked in famine relief and for temperance and against smoking. The Ramabai

Association in the United States provided her with some of the funds she needed for her work. American money was indispensable to the success of her work, although there was also occasional friction between Ramabai and her donors.

THE PLIGHT OF INDIAN WOMEN

This first selection is a powerful letter written from London on June 11, 1883, to British official and former Bombay governor Sir Bartle Frere, describing the plight of women and asking for aid in her work.

TO THE HON'BLE SIR BARTLE FRERE SAHEB BAHADOOR

Honoured Sir,

While I was in India, I have at various times heard of your renown. The Indian people would never be able to obliterate from their minds the various good deeds done by you while Governor of the Bombay Presidency. I, as an Indian female, am so greatly obliged to you for the acts of kindness done to my country.

I cannot say how much I feel delighted at your kindly granting me an interview today, even though you had an urgent appointment elsewhere. . . .

It was only today that I heard from yourself that you were in India for fifty years. Is not that dear country of my birth, where you passed half your life, and its people entitled to your friendship? . . . And for this reason only I made myself bold to write this letter. And if in doing it I have been mistaken, you will kindly pardon me.

It is rather ridiculous for a person like myself to give information about Indian matters to you who have lived in India for so many years, and who are older than myself and possess superior knowledge. Yet the object of this letter is not to inform you but to present you the picture of the female community of India, as to their condition, which I beg leave to mention briefly.

The females in India consider it to be a result of sin to be born a female; and I myself endorse this view, because I think that the condition of women in India is not better than that of animals in hell. By this I don't mean to say that all women in India are miserable. Though there are many women in India that are happy, yet considering the entire female population of India, the happy ones are very few. I will try to give you an idea of the life of a Hindoo woman.

To commence with, the Indian people seem to think that no one ought to have a female child born to him. The supposed reason is that there is no use of a female in this life. Though this belief is not universal, yet it is general. If a female child happens to be born to anyone, there is a feeling

of sadness. And it is sometimes observed that the parents of female children treat them badly. The reason for it is not that they are wanting in parental affection, but that they follow the general tide of opinion. As the girls grow older, their fathers feel them to be more burdensome. There is a saying that "it is more difficult to rear up a girl than to keep an elephant." . . .

The Indian people do not take the same amount of care for the education of their girls as they do of their boys. Because it is not only considered to be of no use to give education to girls, but it is the general belief that girls rather spoil by education. . . .

And thus it is that people rid themselves of their daughters by marrying them [off] at an early age, following the general practice. When a girl has attained the age of ten or eleven, she has to live with her husband's family. For the time they live with their parents they pass a tolerably happy life. But when these girls are married there is a life of misery in store for them in the future. Those that lead happy lives after marriage are very rare, and are considered to be very fortunate. Young children not even able to speak well, are snatched away from the lap of their mothers and thrown into the crush of worldly life. . . .

There are very few mothers-in-law that treat their sons' wives as their own daughters. In India a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law hold the same relation towards each other, as there is between a cat and a rat. There is no hope for a girl to receive education when she has gone to her husband's house. A girl, when she has gone to her husband's house, unlearns all she might have learnt while with her father. There is no occasion offered to girls to receive their education, for while young their lives are spent in [enduring] the cruelty of their mothers-in-law and sisters-in-law. . . .

The state of the wives of such men is greatly deplorable. These men treat their wives in the same way as from history we know the Spaniards treated the Indians in America. In India when women are married, their husbands stand to them in the place of their parents, sovereign, and owner. If they treat them badly there is no one in the world to protect them. . . . There is not a single day that passes, without recording that their husbands beat them like animals and call them names. Some wives, when they feel the treatment [to be] unbearable, live apart from their husbands, or die a suicidal death; and in their great distress they do not find suicide a difficult deed. And there are some ignorant women, who not knowing the boon of this human existence, cling to an immoral life. They do not, by any means, like that greatly sinful life, but in their deplorable state, no other remedy suggests itself to them.

During the lives of their husbands the wives bear all the pain that is inflicted on them. And if through misfortune their husbands die in their lifetime, there is no end to their misery. On [the] one hand the sorrow of

the death of their husbands is unbearable, and on the other the ill-treatment they receive at the hands of all is really great. The indignities to which widows are subjected in India is [*sic*] indescribable. All people look on them with disgust. [People] seem to think that it is a fault of theirs because [of which] their husbands have died (as if they themselves had killed their husbands). . . . Widows are allowed but one meal a day. It is considered sinful for a widow to eat oftener than once in a day. If there be a widow in a household there is considered to be no need for a servant-girl in it. It is considered to be a widow's duty to be working all day and night like a female slave. A woman if she happens to be a widow in her youth is not allowed to marry again. She is shut up day and night in a dark house. These demons in the shape of human beings don't content themselves with this treatment, but deprive the poor helpless widows of their natural ornament, the hair on their heads. . . . After doing this cruel act, and feeding them only once a day, those people shut them up in the house, thus trying to enclose every chance of their satisfying their carnal desires. . . .

Some kind-hearted people have set the practice of re-marrying widows, but owing to the sternness of our caste, their attempts have been rendered futile. In former days there was the practice of Suttee (burning widows), but Government having put a stop to it, has left us in a worsening state of existence. It would have been far better to be burnt once [and] for all, than being scorched gradually in the fire of misery for the whole of our lives; such exclamations of sorrow are frequently heard coming from the mouths of millions of women. Oh you English brethren of ours, since you have saved us from immediate death by the prevention of Suttee (widow-burning), you can as well now render the rest of our existence happy by some means! Is it proper that one of our sex, the great Queen Victoria, should be the Sovereign of England and Hindoostan, and that we, women, should be subjected to this unbearable torture? . . .

Last year I was at Poona and have established there a female association called Arya Mahila Samaj. This Association is working now even and has its branches at Bombay, Ahmedabad and Viramagaum[?]; and it is hoped that in a few years to come branches of this Association will be spread throughout India. The objects of that Association are three—1st, to put a stop to the marriage of children; 2nd, to prevent a man re-marrying while the first wife is living; 3rd, to give help to destitute women; and to encourage female education.

The accomplishment of the first two objects requires the countenance of the Government and the consent of the entire community; and so just now we do not make ourselves anxious about them. The third object is feasible just now, and we try our best to accomplish it as much as possible, and direct our energies to its achievement. . . .

Honoured Sir, I am a poor, helpless, ignorant and weak being. I by my own self would not be able to do much good to my sisters in India. But I

feel thankful to Almighty God for having offered me the opportunity of enabling the cry of distress of the female sex of India to reach your ears. I have not the power of relieving the poor helpless females of my country from their misery with money, but am prepared to give my powers and life for the object. Is it possible that yourself and fellow-countrymen of yours would not redress the grievances of your Indian sisters? I hope and feel that this adventurous mission of mine of bringing to you this cry of my Indian sisters would not prove useless, having left my own dear country and come to your land after travelling over six-and-a-quarter thousand miles. . . .

In conclusion I beg to take leave of you by wishing you every blessing from God, and that the Almighty may give you the power and will to give us your aid.

Your most obedient servant

Ramabai

Member of the Committee of the Arya Mahila Association

[From Pandita Ramabai Sarasvati, *The Cry of Indian Women* (1883), reproduced in *Pandita Ramabai Through Her Own Words:*

Selected Works, ed. and trans. M. Kosambi (New Delhi:

Oxford University Press, 2000), 105, 106, 107–108, 108–109, 110, 111, 112, 113.]

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT

Ramabai composed this brief autobiographical sketch just before she sailed to America in 1886.

I was born in Mangalore District, in a forest named Gangamul, on the Western Ghats in April 1858. My father's name was Anant Shastri Dongre. He belonged to the caste of the Chitpavana Brahmins, and was a good scholar in the Sanskrit Shastras. . . . From the time of their marriage, my father began to educate my mother. At that time, that is to say fifty years ago, in the Mangalore District, there had been nothing done by the English Government for the improvement of the people. All classes were against female education, and the prejudice clings to them still (e.g. I have received a letter last month from my half-brother, disapproving of my coming to England to learn English, etc). When my father began to teach my mother Sanskrit and Dharma Shastras, the people in the neighbourhood disapproved of it, and threatened to put him out of [their] caste but he would not heed them and as he was in no way beholden to them, he pursued his own ways. . . .

In 1874, I lost both my parents within two months of each other. We were living then in the Madras Presidency. After their death, because of the persecution which was carried on against us on account of my not being married and because he advocated female education, we were obliged to leave our country [region]. After a few months my sister died of cholera, and my brother and I

travelled for six years in various parts of India. In our travels we were obliged to go on foot, not having the means to afford ourselves conveyance. In this way we went a distance of 2,000 miles, and thus we had a good opportunity of seeing the sufferings of Hindu women and were much touched by their sorrows. We saw it not only in one part of India, but it was the same in the Madras Presidency, Bombay Presidency, Punjab, the North-West Province, Bengal, Assam, etc. This made us think much of how it was possible to improve the condition of women and raise them out of their degradation. We were able to do nothing directly to help them but in the towns and villages we often addressed large audiences of people and urged upon them the education of the women and children. In order to be able to converse with the different races we were obliged to learn Hindi (as it is a general language in India) and Bengalee. In the year 1880, when we were in Dacca, my brother died, and then I was alone in the world. Six months after, I married a Bengalee gentleman, Bipin Behari Das [Medhavi]. He was a great friend of my brother, and I knew him two years before I married. He was born in the Sylhet District in Assam, and belonged to the caste of Shudras (the fourth of the Hindu castes). . . . It was against the Hindu religion for me, being a Brahmin, to marry a Shudra, but neither my husband nor I believed in the Hindu religion, so we were married under the Civil Marriage Act.¹³ After our marriage, we lived together in Cachar (Silchar) in Assam, for 16 months. In 1882, my husband died of cholera, leaving me with one little daughter. After his death, I had to pay off his debts; then I went to the Bombay Presidency and lived there for a year. During that time my countrymen helped me and they were willing to maintain me in independence, but my wish was to come to England and thus fit myself for a life of usefulness, in order to benefit my countrywomen. I had not money to pay my passage, so I wrote a book [*Stri Dharma Niti*] and published it. The Government kindly bought 600 copies of it (which was a great help to me) and other copies were sold by booksellers. In this way I received sufficient money for my passage, but how to support myself and [my] child in England I knew not. It was my good fortune to become acquainted with the Wantage Sisters working in Poona; so I asked them if they would help me, and they promised to do so. Now I am staying in Wantage with them, and they are kindly supporting and teaching me. I am very grateful for their kindness. If my health allows me to carry out my plans, and it is God's will that I should do so, it is my intention to study medicine in England in order to benefit my countrywomen and with the hope of inducing some of them to follow my example. As I was by birth a Brahmin, my religion was at first Hinduism. Then for a time, I was a Theist, believing that Theism was taught in [the] Vedas. In the last two months, however, I have accepted Christianity and hope shortly to receive Holy Baptism.

["An Autobiographical Account," in *Pandita Ramabai Through Her Own Words*, 115–116, 117, 118.]

TARABAI SHINDE AND A FEMINIST DEFENSE OF WOMEN

Tarabai Shinde (ca. 1850–1910) was a well-educated, high-caste, wealthy Maratha woman who used her acerbic wit and keen powers of observation to pillory conservative Hindu opinions of women, defend a female victim of patriarchal oppression, and provide an outlet for her own disappointing experiences as a woman in society. Shinde was a friend of Jotirao and Savitribai Phule, whose school for Untouchable girls and shelter for upper-caste widows (who were forbidden from remarrying) she supported. In turn, Jotirao Phule defended Shinde when her Marathi book, *Strī Purush Tulanā* (*A Comparison Between Men and Women*), caused a storm of outrage. *Strī Purush Tulanā*, a booklet of about forty pages, was written in response to a vitriolic editorial that appeared in an antireformist weekly, the *Pune Vaibhav*. Commenting on the general moral turpitude of women, as evidenced in the killing of her illegitimate son by a woman named Vijayalakshmi, the editorial accused women of inherent vices and weaknesses; Shinde challenged this conclusion, blaming men not only for exhibiting worse behavior but also for being the cause of desperate women's moral lapses.

THE TREACHERY OF MEN

In the excerpts to follow, one gets a feel for Shinde's intelligent style of argumentation, her daring in focusing an attack on the Hindu scriptures as contributing to misogynist attitudes, and her own sadness at having been married as a child to a man whom she never loved. The text, though published in 1882, was virtually unknown until it was rediscovered and republished in 1975.

Let me ask you something, Gods! You are supposed to be omnipotent and freely accessible to all. You are said to be completely impartial. What does that mean? That you have never been known to be partial. But wasn't it you who created both men and women? Then why did you grant happiness only to men and brand women with nothing but agony? Your will was done! But the poor women have had to suffer for it down the ages.

One comes across several charges against women both in the written literature and in everyday discourse. But do men not suffer from the same flaws that women are supposed to have? Do men not cheat as women do? Theft, incest, murder, robbery, deception, fraud, swindling of government funds, taking bribes, changing truth to falsehood and falsehood to truth—do men not do any of these? . . .

If, as you claim, a woman has more power than a device for witchcraft or black magic, let me ask you, you who are endowed with an intellect far more powerful than hers, what have you not achieved with your intellect? You who have made possible what was believed to be impossible, of what worth can a woman's power be before your valiant deeds? Of none.

Second, it may be true that women are a whirlpool of suspicion. But that is because they are uneducated and all kinds of doubts inhabit their minds. But even then, it must be borne in mind that their suspicions are usually and necessarily about their own relationships. But if one casts just a fleeting glance at the webs of doubt in your minds, one's eyes will surely be dazed. Your minds are full of all kinds of treacherous plans. "Let's bluff this moneylender and pocket a thousand rupees from him." Or, "Let's tell that *jagirdar* such and such a thing and swindle him out of some five hundred rupees." Or, "Let's lie to that officer about that particular case and change his judgment to X's favor." Or, "Let's register those false documents instead of the true ones." Or, "That woman Y, what a coquette she really is! What airs she gives herself! Must corner her one of these days, and see whether some affair with her can be managed. My current affair has begun to bore me. This is the chance to end it once and for all and begin a new one." Such disgusting thoughts never enter a woman's mind. . . .

Third, women are called the acme of impudence. But does your own species lack this quality in any measure? A judicious comparison would reveal the balance weighted far heavier on your side in this respect. Fourth, women are considered a megapolis of inadvertent acts. But what about you, the dastardly, perfidious, treacherous people that you are? You, who would not hesitate even for a moment in cutting somebody's throat immediately after winning his confidence. Do you never commit such insidious acts? You speak as if you are Holy Temples of Reason! Bravo! Yet can you find a match, anywhere, at any time, for the perfidious acts that you commit every day? On top of all this, you have the audacity to call yourselves judicious! What can anyone say? . . .

Furthermore, we need to ask, what is the greatest crime that women commit? Adultery. That is the highest peak of their criminal ventures. They behave recklessly only because of such inclinations. But then, who takes the first step of sowing the seeds of such designs in their minds? Who else but you? However shameless a woman may be, she will never throw herself into the arms of a strange man. That is an eternal truth. Do you know what a woman's idea of happiness is? First, the husband of her choice. One whom she can love. Once their hearts are united, she will not worry about poverty. She will endure any calamity for him. . . . But . . . can adultery really be considered an act of the most heinous nature? Our shastras certainly do not seem to think so! There is no need to think that such things did not happen in the past. In fact, those very shastras that you so very glibly quote are full of the most supreme confusion regarding this problem. For example, the shastras most freely sanctioned such practices in several circumstances. Suppose a king died, leaving behind him a queen who did not have a son, she could select any *rishi* of her choice and beget sons from him to order to augment the family. And she could keep him till she had as many children as she wanted. What was this if not adultery? But wasn't it sanctioned by the shastras? . . .

The fifth charge against women is that they are the treasure houses of transgressions. But in fact, it is you who fit that description best. It is you who cause women to transgress. Let me substantiate this. Many fathers give away their

beautiful and very young daughters, who are hardly ten or eleven years old, to men who are eighty or ninety in exchange for a purse of gold. They do it with an eye only on his wealth. . . . In this world, who is there who would love a woman as much as the husband does, apart from her mother, of course? That is a fact. But what about her who loses both? Who can she depend on when the red-hot fire of youth is burning in the pallav of her sari? This, then, is the fate of the women who are married off to old husbands. . . .

I have one suggestion to offer in this regard. The government should brand the stupid prattling mouths of these men with red-hot irons. This will strike terror in their hearts and such crimes will never be committed! Think of that miserable woman who later on spends her life in some godforsaken corner, or in the jail, mourning her fate, weeping her heart out, trying to wash the stains off her character. All her honor is torn to rags by such public disgrace. Many commit suicide, many abandon their relatives, give up their wealth, and go into exile. Even a cobra is preferable to you. At least it kills immediately. But the poison that you inject into her afflicts her with intolerable agony and causes her to die a slow, slow death. Thus you are more treacherous than even a poisonous snake. . . .

I'm sure that there are very few men who are ruined by women. But it would be difficult even to guess at the number of women ruined by men. . . . You are nothing but learned asses! Yes, that is what you are really. It is said that it's always dark just under a lamp. You are no exception to that rule! If only you realized how much evil you contain, it would break your heart! . . .

[From *Women Writing in India, 600 B.C. to the Present*,
vol. 1: *600 B.C. to the Early Twentieth Century*, ed. Susie Tharu and K. Lalita
(Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993), 1:223–224, 225–226, 227–228, 234–235.
Trans. M. Pandit.]

D. K. KARVE AND ANANDIBAI KARVE: LIVING WITH WIDOW REMARRIAGE

As we have seen in chapter 2, the Widow Remarriage Bill had passed in 1856, largely through the efforts of Ishvarchandra Vidyasagar. And various reformers like Pandita Ramabai and Tarabai Shinde used their position in society to tend to the needs of, or argue for the rights of, widows. In the following selections, however, one gets a glimpse of what it was like in the late nineteenth century to marry a widow, or to be remarried as a widow. The experiences of D. K. Karve and Anandibai Karve demonstrate the degree to which a legislated right takes decades, even a century or more, to be realized and accepted as common practice.

Dhondo Keshav (D. K.) Karve (1858–1962) hailed from a Chitpavan Brahman community that did not sanction widow remarriage. A prominent social reformer who had already broken with his community in believing intellectually in widow remarriage, Karve lived up to his principles: after the death of his first wife in 1891, he chose to marry a twenty-three-year-old widow, Anandibai (1865–1950), the sister of one of his best friends. Thereafter he devoted himself to improving the lives of widows, with

special attention to educational opportunities. In 1894 he established the "Widow Remarriage Association," to aid widows who wished to remarry; in 1896 the Hindu Widows' Home, for the education of those who could not or did not wish to remarry; and in 1916 the Indian Women's University. Anandibai and her husband had three sons, the daughter of one of whom was the celebrated anthropologist Irawati Karve (1905–1970).

MARRYING A WIDOW: MEMOIRS

D. K. Karve's autobiography, *Atmavritta* (My Life Story), was first published in Marathi in 1915, with a second edition in 1928 and a third in 1958. Anandibai's *Māzhe Purāna* (My Story) was edited from reminiscences by her youngest daughter-in-law, and first published in Marathi in 1944. Two passages by D. K. Karve, and one by Anandibai Karve, are translated below.

Whenever I thought of marrying again, the prospect of marrying a girl who was young enough to be my daughter frightened me. There was no possibility of marrying anyone older, because no girl remained unmarried beyond the age of twelve or thirteen in those days. Naturally the question of marrying a widow came to my mind.¹⁴ I had thought about this matter even when I was a boy. Widow remarriage was quite unknown among the higher castes although one or two such marriages had taken place. I was only eleven years old when the first such marriage was celebrated in Bombay in 1869. We in Murud were especially interested because the bride belonged to our village. This event produced a great commotion in Maharashtra. In 1871, a public discussion among learned Brahmans was held in Poona to determine whether the marriage of widows had the sanction of the ancient Hindu lawbooks. The verdict was six to four against the marriage of widows, and the religious elder gave his final decision in accordance with that. . . .

A different kind of incident, which I remember very well, took place in Murud about the same time when I appeared for the public service examination. An orthodox priest who lived not far from our house had a daughter whose husband had abandoned her. She was living in her father's house, wearing the red *kunku* mark on her forehead,¹⁵ when somehow she fell victim to some unscrupulous man. She continued to live with the family until her condition could no longer be concealed but had to leave the house after that. The father was threatened with excommunication by the village council for having harboured a sinner and had to pay a heavy penalty. Some years later I met the woman in a place of pilgrimage in southern Maharashtra which incurably sick people, women in difficulties, and lunatics often seek out. The poor creature saw me while she was going round and round the temple counting her rounds on the beads of a rosary and turned her face away. The episode left an indelible impression on my mind.

Joshi and I often discussed the question of the marriage of widows; both of us were sympathetic about the subject. As long as my wife was living, the matter was only of academic interest. But after the death of my wife I thought deeply

about the problem and came to the conclusion that if I were to marry again, it would be to a widow.

Now after I had been in Poona for some time, not only friends but my brother and mother also began to press me to give my consent to a second marriage. In those days marrying a widow meant being cut off from society, especially in the case of persons who had relatives living in the rural areas, which were very orthodox. My first task was, therefore, to persuade my brother and mother. They were very good-natured and had a high regard for me. No doubt my marrying a widow would cause them great humiliation and they had to prepare themselves to face it. I also told them that if they did not give me their consent, I would prefer to remain a widower throughout my life. They were thus in a dilemma. They realized how strong my convictions were, but they also knew what they would have to endure in our village. Finally, however, they gave me permission to do what I thought right, provided however that I did not involve them in any way.

The next question was perhaps more difficult in the society in which I was living, namely, to find a suitable bride. Some friends had actually suggested some suitable widows as possibilities, but I was hesitant and could not make up my mind. The question was solved in an unexpected manner. My friend Joshi had a younger sister named Godu, who had been widowed at the age of eight. She had lived in the family of her late husband until she was about twenty-three, when Joshi brought her to Bombay intending to educate her. She lived in our joint family for a few months before she was admitted to the famous Pandita Ramabai's school as its first widow student. When the school later moved from Bombay to Poona, Godubai went with it. Her head had been shaved according to the prevalent custom, and as her parents were orthodox in their views, the idea of marrying her never entered my mind.

About this time Joshi's father was in Poona on a short visit and came to see me. To my surprise he asked me directly why I had not married again. When I told him of my intention of marrying a widow if at all, he remained silent for a few minutes and then replied that, in that case, I did not have to go far to seek a suitable bride. I replied that I understood what he had in mind but asked whether he was serious. When he answered in the affirmative, I requested him to see his daughter to ask whether she was agreeable to the proposal.

Although the elder Mr. Joshi was an orthodox Brahman in his day-to-day behavior, he was in essence a liberal-minded person who attached great importance to sentiment and purity of thought. One could really describe him as having very broad human sympathies. He went to Godubai's school and reported to me that she was willing to marry me. I also learned that the head of the school had persuaded her not to submit to the barber and she had let her hair grow. She was thus ready to marry me as soon as convenient. Her father could not, of course, associate himself openly with the marriage and went away to his village.

My friends were ready to help in all the arrangements. It was the first marriage of a widow to be celebrated in Poona, and they wanted to make it an important event. The question of a house in which to celebrate the wedding would normally

have been difficult but a householder whose widowed daughter had herself been married in Bombay some years back came forward and offered his house. We even secured the services of a very learned priest with advanced views in this matter, although a couple of my friends were prepared to recite the sacred verses and perform the religious ceremonies if it became necessary.

My second marriage was celebrated on March 11, 1893. It caused a great commotion all over Maharashtra.

[From D. D. Karve, ed. and trans, *The New Brahmins: Five Maharashtrian Families* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 39–42.]

According to my usual practice of spending at least some part of the annual summer vacation at my native village, I decided to go there with my wife. I had resolved to submit to whatever treatment the people there would give me. Without letting anyone know our exact programme, we suddenly arrived there one evening and occupied a room on the outside of our house but attached to it. The news spread among the Brahman population of the tiny village like wild-fire. Everybody began to discuss what steps should be taken against me, and a meeting of the Brahman caste-council was called the next day, to which every adult Brahman in the village was invited by means of criers. . . . [T]he meeting passed the following resolutions:

1. No person should sit on the same carpet with me.
2. No one should attend a meeting where I was present.
3. My brother should be excommunicated if I entered his compound again.

It was understood that nobody would touch either my wife or me or take food with us. . . . During our short stay, I could not even speak with my mother or my sister. There was no lack of voluntary detectives who kept a watch in order to find out if any food was passed to us from the house.

[From Karve, *The New Brahmins*, 46–47.]

[Anandibai Karve writes] Once Father came to Poona to pay me a visit in the Sharada Sadan and stayed with Mr. Karve, whom he knew through Mr. Karve's friendship with Narharpant, my eldest brother. Mr. Karve was a professor in the Fergusson College now. Father asked Mr. Karve whether he was considering marrying again, and Mr. Karve replied that if he married at all, he wanted to marry a widow.

Next day Father came to see me. He spoke to me about marriage and persuaded me that this was the best course. With some hesitation I gave my consent.

. . . In a few days Mr. Karve came to see me in the Sharada Sadan and made me an offer of marriage, explaining at the same time that he was a poor man and that we would have to face persecution from society. I accepted his offer, and he went away to his village to get his mother and elder brother to consent to this step. . . .

Pandita Ramabai was not very pleased about my plan to remarry. She thought Mr. Karve's small stature a sign of bad health and also drew my attention to the fact, which of course I knew already, that he had a twelve-year-old son. But when she saw that I had made up my mind, she persuaded Mr. Karve to assign a life policy worth Rs. 3,000 to me and had the document drawn up.

Even now, I am surprised at the progressive nature of my father. No ordinary Brahman father in those days would ever have thought of even tolerating the marriage of his widowed daughter, let alone persuading her to follow that course. Even in our house, where everybody feared the pollution of the shadow of the Untouchable Mahar, my father used to allow them to come up to our porch and often gave them buttermilk. In the first few years of my widowhood, he allowed me to make all the preparations for the worship of the house gods. He used to say, "The God who allowed you to become a widow must allow you to do all this." Altogether, he was exceptionally reformist and liberal for his times.

My marriage was celebrated with orthodox rites by a learned priest on March 11, 1893. That was also the anniversary of the Sharada Sadan, which had been started on that day four years back; and Pandita Ramabai held a big reception there, which all the students attended. My name was changed to Anandibai. . . .

After I began my married life, I went once or twice to the Sharada Sadan as a young bride would go to her parents' house. But very soon the institution gave up its secular policy and became openly a Christian missionary institution. Most Hindus removed their wards from it and it moved to a place about twenty miles from Poona. Once or twice Ramabai tried indirectly to get us converted, but when she found that we had no inclination for it, she gave up her attempts.

[From Karve, *The New Brahmins*, 70–72.]

ASHRAF ALI THANAWI: INSTRUCTING THE RESPECTABLE MUSLIM WOMAN

Ashraf Ali Thanawi (1864–1943) was a leader of the Deobandi reform movement that gathered momentum in North India in the late 1800s. Leaders of this movement believed that Muslims had lost their way, and sought to reeducate them through reaching out to religious leaders, preaching and teaching, public debate, and pamphlets and books. Ashraf Ali Thanawi's most famous work, *Bihishti Zavar* (*Heavenly Jewel*), ca. 1900, sought to provide a basic education for a respectable Muslim woman. It rapidly became a classic gift for North Indian (Sunni) brides, and has been often reprinted and reedited; despite being much criticized, it remains widely available today.

THE EVILS OF GOING OUT

The *Bihishti Zavar* sought to empower women through their own moral agency: they were to choose to submit to God and to accept the social restrictions that He had ordained. Thanawi invited women to become literate, and even to attain learning equal to

that of men; he also imparted what he considered to be appropriate instruction in Islam. Like many Hindu reformers of the period, he also urged the inculcation of a self-conscious respectability, shorn of the extravagance of competitive display and flirtation.

ON WOMEN GATHERING FOR CELEBRATIONS

The women of a family gather for many celebrations, including those described above as well as many others. All described here are illegitimate . . .

Celebrations aside, whenever women have a whim, they just think, "I have not seen so and so for ages!" Someone gets sick, and off they go to see her. They may hear of some occasion of celebration, and off they go to offer congratulations. Some women are so free that they set out at night without even summoning a palanquin! Worse yet, as soon as night falls, they think of travel! To go out on a moonlit night is even more shameless. The point is that it is wrong for women to leave their homes and go about here and there.

At most, it is permissible for them to visit their parents or other close relatives, and then only once or twice a year. Beyond that, to go out imprudently, as is the custom, is simply illegitimate, whether it is to the home of relatives or someone else and whether the occasion be a wedding or a condolence, visiting the sick, offering congratulations, or joining the wedding procession from the bridegroom's house. It is not proper to go out for a wedding at all, even if it is at the home of close relatives. A husband who gives permission is guilty, and so is the wife. It is lamentable that in all Hindustan this rule is nowhere acted upon, and the custom is not even considered improper. Indeed, it is regarded as legitimate, although it is the source of so many sins. Now that you know the practice to be wrong, you must wholly repent. This is the injunction of the *sharī'at*. Here follows a list of the evils of going out.

When the news spreads among the kinfolk that such and such a ceremony is set in such and such a house, every wife starts thinking about a costly new outfit. Sometimes she asks for money from her husband; sometimes she just summons a cloth merchant on her own and shops on credit or takes a loan with interest. She refuses to accept her husband's objections if he says he does not have the means. The outfit is obviously made just for showing off. In the *hadis* it is written that a person who dresses to show off will be dressed on the Day of Judgment in garments of ignominy. Thus a woman commits one sin.

To spend money with this motive of showing off is to waste it. The evil of such waste has already been discussed in the section above. This is a second sin.

To make demands on a husband beyond his means, without necessity, is to cause him vexation. This is a third sin.

To summon the cloth seller and to converse unnecessarily with a strange man to whom you expose half your arm, decorated with bangles and henna, as you handle the cloth—all this is to violate a proper sense of modesty. This is a fourth sin.

To take a loan on interest is to pay interest. This is a fifth sin.

To make inappropriate demands on a husband may lead his good resolve astray. He may be tempted to deprive someone else of rights or to take a bribe so that he can fulfill demands that cannot be met by legitimate means. This sin takes place because of the wife. To be the cause of this is the sixth sin.

Often, a woman purchases gold and silver edging or fillets of brocade for her outfits. Out of ignorance or carelessness, she may pay interest on the purchase, because she does not understand the complexity of buying silver and gold and things made out of them. . . . This is the seventh sin.

Women do not regard an outfit made for one wedding as adequate for another wedding. A woman needs a new outfit for each occasion, for fear that the other women may taunt her for having only one outfit and arriving in the same dress. Thus all the sins are repeated again. To keep on committing a sin is a sin. This is the eighth sin. So much for preparing the clothes.

Now, thoughts turn to jewelry. If a woman has none, she wheedles a loan of someone else's jewelry and displays it as her own. This is a form of lying and deception. The noble *hadis* says that those who falsely display something as their own are like a person who wears two garments, one of lies and one of deceit. From head to foot, that person is wrapped in lies. This is the ninth sin.

The jewelry may jingle so much that everyone's eyes are riveted on it as the wearer enters. The noble *hadis* forbids jingling jewelry, because Satan is present in every sound. This is the tenth sin.

Now comes the matter of conveyance. Either the woman orders her servant to fetch a palanquin, or a palanquin is sent from the house where the gathering is to be held. Then the lady suddenly thinks of bathing. There is some delay in preparing water and *khali* [a cake of mustard seed oil for washing hair]. Then there is further delay in "forming the resolve" to bathe. In all this delay, she fails to say her prayers. No matter! Or she disrupts something else important. No problem! In fact, such disruption occurs daily upon the occasion of the bath of these grand ladies [*bhahamanus*]. If the prayer is missed or read at a disapproved time, that is the eleventh sin.

The bearers of the palanquin, the *kahar*, are summoning the lady at the door, and from within the woman is shouting curses in return. To dismiss someone or to curse them without cause is tyranny and sin. This is the twelfth sin.

Now, with great difficulty, and muttering, "God, God," the lady is ready. She has the bearer move away and seats herself. Many ladies are so careless that they let their hem hang out of the palanquin, or leave the curtain open on one side, or reek so much of perfume that its sweet smell hangs about them on the road. That is to display beauty before strangers. The noble *hadis* says that any woman who goes out of her house wearing perfume in such a way that its odor reaches others is very bad. This is the thirteenth sin.

Now she arrives at her "intended destination." The bearers put down the palanquin and move aside. She descends without hesitation and enters the

house, not even thinking whether some strange man might be in the house. Frequently on these occasions she will encounter a stranger, and their eyes will meet. Women lack the common sense to first make inquiry. Not to inquire when there is a strong likelihood of possible sin is the fourteenth sin.

Now she has arrived at the house. She greets the women of the house. Fine, for many do not even take the trouble to speak but simply place their hand to their forehead in greeting. The *hadis* says that this style of greeting is forbidden. Some say the word “*salam*,” simply “*salam*.” That too is against the *sunna*. One should say, “*As-salamu ‘alaikum*” [“Peace be upon you”]. . . . Always to oppose the *sharī‘at* is the fifteenth sin. . . .

There are even more faults and sins in women’s gatherings. How can something be legitimate that entails such innumerable ills? To abandon these customary gatherings is absolutely necessary.

[Ashraf Ali Thanawi, *Bihisti Zewar*, in *Perfecting Women: Maulana Ashraf ‘Alī Thanawī’s Bihishti Zewar*. Trans. Barbara Daly Metcalf. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 108–112.]

NAGENDRABALA DASİ AND THE NEW COMPANIONATE MARRIAGE

It is important to stress that most women during the reformist era were not authors of controversial tracts on women’s issues, nor were they lone heroines struggling to learn to read in the most adverse of circumstances. Most women lived within the confines of married life, raised children, did household chores, and were expected to embody the auspicious qualities of Lakshmī; they were generally subject to various constraints, especially of movement and education. Since the 1830s, elite male reformers, from Rammohan Roy and Ishvarchandra Vidyasagar to Jotirao Phule, had been campaigning on behalf of women’s legal rights, but often the customary rights, such as the right to education, and freedom of movement and choice, were of more value to women in average contexts. Nor were such goods necessarily desired outside the life of the family, as can be seen from the following excerpts drawn from an advice manual for girls and women.

In 1900, Nagendrabala Dasi (1878–1906), a well-known woman poet from Bengal, wrote an advice manual called *Women’s Dharma* (*Nārī Dharma*). In Nagendrabala’s view, it is the relationship between husband and wife that is the main crucible for change. Nagendrabala employs the central ideas from the most popular domestic manual of the period, Dhirendranath Pal’s *Conversations with the Wife*, one of several typically Brahmo-authored texts designed to create an interior space for the Bengali man in which order, hygiene, and enlightened morality would complement his own developing sense of gentility.

Like Dhirendranath and other male manual writers, Nagendrabala wants to organize family life around the marital relationship. But unlike them she talks about the husband/wife relationship using the older “traditional” concept of the *pativrata* (the woman devoted to her husband). She asserts that “the husband is a woman’s only vis-

ible god," encourages women to follow the examples of "ancient Aryan heroines," and is also explicitly critical of "the mother-in-law" whose sins destroy the family. In the new family she is imagining, the husband will be the sole authority over his wife and family life, and the extended family elders, particularly the mother-in-law, will lose their traditional authority.

ADVICE FOR A NEW PATRIARCHY

Nagendrabala's vision may fall short of later feminist hopes for women's relations with men, and to modern readers the devotion to the husband that she enjoins may seem unappealing, but in early twentieth-century Bengal it represented what Judith Walsh has called a particularly female version of a "new patriarchy." That is, it was the creative response of married women to the companionate marriage ideal promulgated by the reformers, in which freedom from the oppression of the extended family, and the chance to learn to read and write so as to be a better friend and assistant to the husband, were enthusiastically embraced, as purchased by submission to the husband's benevolent wisdom.

A wife has four different relationships with her husband, and because of this a husband can claim from her four different kinds of love: devotion, passion, affection, and true love. Among the many kinds of love, these four are the most important; and among these four, true love is the most important of all. Only when love is separated from worldliness, that is, when it lacks self-interest, is it called "true love." Hindus say about such love: "Nothing else is as perfectly pure." In most cases, people, regardless of whether they are men or women, offer each of these four kinds of love only within the relationship for which it is most appropriate, yet because a wife has four different relationships with her husband, *he* receives all four kinds of love from her.

The first relationship a wife has with her husband is that of a "partner"; the second is that of a "wife"; the third, a "friend"; and the fourth is the "spiritual relationship." In the first case, "partnership" means the sharing of precious things, such as fame, respect, wealth, knowledge, bravery, happiness, peace, pleasure, dharma, and so forth. Together husband and wife earn these riches, these precious things, in the world, and they make each other happy by sharing what they have earned. That is why there is a "partnership" relationship between them. The husband is the wife's sole protector; he provides her with food, clothing and shelter; he takes care to always keep her safe. All this is in his domain. And, because it is her husband's maintenance that protects her throughout her life, the wife is grateful to him and he deserves her devotion.

Second is the "wife" relationship. This relationship exists for the creation of offspring and it is because of this that a husband has the right to his wife's passions.

Third is the relationship of a "friend." A friend is someone who gives good advice, who wishes you well as much in prosperity as in danger. It is precisely

because one especially notices this little sentiment between husbands and wives that a “friend” relationship is said to exist between them. And it is because of this relationship that a husband receives his wife’s affection.

Fourth is the “spiritual” relationship. This relationship is the most serious. It is not just for this world—it remains unimpaired in the next life as well. The love that connects the souls of husband and wife is “spiritual” love—or the “spiritual” relationship. It lasts forever. A husband and wife who lack this sacred relationship are neither a real husband nor a real wife. Their relationship has no more meaning than that which exists between utensils in a household. “My husband and I are different”—as long as such a sense persists within a wife’s heart, she and her husband will lack this “spiritual” relationship. Only when a wife is able to understand—“My husband and I are one and the same”—only when she can understand the words of the marriage ceremony— . . . [“This heart which is mine, let that heart be yours”]—only then do we know that a “spiritual” relationship exists between husband and wife. It is only then—when this relationship becomes established and the wife is fit to be called a “true wife”—that a marriage achieves fulfillment. Such a marriage is full of sweetness. . . .

A wife considers even her husband’s relatives as her own. As a result she should be as devoted to her husband’s father and mother and love and respect them as if they were her own. Unfortunately, such feelings are now disappearing from many places, and it would be no exaggeration even to say that the world no longer has brilliant portraits of model mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law—such as we did, in the past, with Kaushalya and Sita. Nowadays one sees many joint families ruined by the inability of the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law to get along. In such cases, it is extremely difficult to determine who is really at fault. . . .

Beginning some years back women’s education ceased to be practiced and society began to consider the class of women inferior to the class of men. Because of that many mistaken prejudices arose about women. For without education a life cannot be built nor can intelligence flourish. An ignorant person suffers terrible mental anguish at every step, and such a person often does great harm to society. Therefore, it is essential that *everyone*, women *and* men, receive an education appropriate to their own field of work. Beginning some years back, people did not understand this, and since then, as a result, we saw the beginning of the mother-in-law’s unjustified tyranny over the daughter-in-law.

[From Judith E. Walsh, *How to Be the Goddess of Your Home: An Anthology of Bengali Domestic Manuals* (New Delhi: Yoda Press, 2005), 144–145, 145–146, 147–148, 149.]



Chapter 4

LIBERAL SOCIAL AND POLITICAL THOUGHT IN THE LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

THE MODERATES

Prior to the British conquest, political power and personal loyalties in India were focused on dynasties and on their rulers, who governed territories that ranged from small fiefdoms to large imperial systems. Nation-states with elected governments were still a thing of the future.

A different chapter opened when British arms and diplomacy placed two-thirds of the subcontinent under their own direct rule as “paramount power,” and the other one-third under “indirect rule” by British-sponsored Indian princes. Using lessons from the Mughals and their own experiments, the British constructed a relatively efficient administrative machinery. Gradually the sinews of this polity were strengthened by the introduction of printing and journalism, railroads, a postal and telegraph system, and the growth of an all-India economy centering in large modern cities accessible to oceangoing ships. Although there had been considerable internal and overseas trade for many centuries, these new methods of transport and communication made possible more effective interconnections.

This political and economic order attracted Indians who were anxious to improve their status and increase their wealth by entering its service, as well as businessmen in new commercial centers such as Bombay and Calcutta. A class of Indians, sometimes labeled “the new middle class,” mediated between the foreign rulers or traders and the mass of the people. Using their knowledge of English as the key to advancement, Indian clerks and functionaries found

employment in government posts; Indian lawyers pleaded in British-style courts; Indian businessmen dealt with foreign firms; and Indian teachers imparted to their countrymen the language and culture of the conquerors. This rising middle class demonstrated a loyalty to the British that outweighed the angry discontent of older elites—both Muslim and Hindu. After the suppression of these elites in the Rebellion of 1857, the British enlisted members of both older and newer elites in institutions designed to make the Raj more secure.

But the English education that provided so many willing collaborators for the British in India eventually proved the undoing of their empire. For one thing, the members of the new middle class—whether from the south or the north, from Bengal or Maharashtra—could all communicate with each other through the medium of a common language. Equally important, their reading of the English classics instilled in them Western ideals of justice, freedom, and love of country that they blended with Indian ideas and beliefs. As their numbers grew they found good government jobs too few, especially since the best were reserved for Europeans. To economic frustration was added the bitter sting of racial discrimination, for the Rebellion of 1857 had sharpened British suspicions of Indian loyalty, and the late-nineteenth-century doctrines of Social Darwinism and aggressive imperialism combined to increase the white man's feeling of inherent superiority over his darker-skinned subjects. Ignoring the sympathetic statements made in Parliament and the conciliatory proclamation of Queen Victoria in 1858, Britishers in India saw little reason to grant Indians a greater measure of control over their own affairs.

Under these circumstances, it was not long before the seed-idea of Indian nationalism implanted by their reading of Western books and their attachment to their native land began to take root in the minds of intelligent and energetic Indians. Educated Indians formed political associations in the Madras, Bombay, and Bengal Presidencies. Then leaders of these regional associations, assisted by a few foreigners such as Allan Octavian Hume (1829–1912), a Scotsman sympathetic to their aspirations, helped make possible the first meeting (in 1885) of the Indian National Congress. This was intended to serve as a forum for the discussion of political reforms and patriotic projects. From this beginning as a safety valve through which the upper and middle classes could air their grievances, the Congress transformed itself into an all-India nationalist organization.

The Moderates,¹ the first men to come forward as leaders of the nationalist movement, shared a great many assumptions with those liberal Englishmen who encouraged them. They believed in the providential character of British rule and in the gradual evolution of India toward enlightenment and self-government under that rule. They regretted what they saw as the backwardness of Hindu society, and worked to bring about the reform of its grosser evils. The poverty of the people depressed them, and they therefore concerned themselves with plans for India's economic improvement. Although they were not themselves devoid of religious faith, they accepted the divorce of religion from govern-

ment; their secular view of politics contrasted markedly with the religious outlook of the Extremists, who later posed a serious challenge to their leadership.

Having become at least partially, as Macaulay had hoped, “English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect” (see chapter 2) the Indian Moderates gained certain advantages—but at the same time, ran certain risks—in guiding the nationalist movement. Their familiarity with British culture enabled them to appeal to the best instincts of their rulers, from whom they demanded the same rights and liberties that all Britons took for granted. Their knowledge of the gradual rise of democratic government in English history furnished them with useful ammunition, and they repeatedly harked back to the assurances given by Parliament and Queen Victoria that Indians would be allowed to compete freely with Europeans for positions in the Indian Civil Service.

In the long run, however, the position of the Moderates was bound to be somewhat vulnerable, for several reasons. Their heavy reliance on British good faith embarrassed them whenever the concessions they asked for were refused or postponed. Moreover, the more Anglicized they became in their thinking, the further they removed themselves from emotional rapport with the bulk of the population—the illiterate and poverty-stricken peasantry.

In one respect the Moderates did great service in expressing the grievances and needs of Indian society. Unwilling to attack British rule because of the political and social reforms it had introduced, they focused their attention on the obvious disparity between Britain’s prosperity and India’s poverty. Dadabhai Naoroji, an Indian businessman resident in London, placed the blame for his country’s plight on foreign rule, and in doing so was seconded by English socialist theoreticians. The Bengali leader Surendranath Banerjea accepted Dadabhai’s thesis, and M. G. Ranade sought a constructive solution in rapid industrialization under government auspices. Ranade’s disciple G. K. Gokhale left the theorizing to others, and bent his efforts to reducing the load of taxation burdening the Indian people. R. C. Dutt, through his economic writings, had a profound influence on the nationalist movement.

Those five men were among the outstanding Moderate leaders in the opening decades of the nationalist movement. It is significant that all were scholarly in temperament; several spent part of their early careers as teachers in colleges, imparting English education to Indian students. Each possessed an excellent command of the English language and was able to hold his own in debates with Englishmen. Four of them—Naoroji, Banerjea, Gokhale, and Dutt—made speaking tours in Great Britain in order to impress the British electorate with the importance of greater self-government for India. The same four also served terms as presidents of the Congress, and all five were deeply involved in its work. Like most educated Indians of the nineteenth century they were bicultural men, in touch with Indian and Western cultures, in a blend somewhat different in each case. Dutt, for example, wrote novels in Bengali while composing critiques of British economic policies in English.

Although the Extremist leaders who shortly emerged could muster far greater support by appealing to popular Hindu symbols and traditions, it is doubtful that they could have succeeded in freeing India without the patient, more diplomatic efforts of the Moderates. The greater willingness of the latter to cooperate with the British in instituting administrative reforms kept the nationalist movement from “going off the rails” into individual acts of violence, which could only lead to severe reprisals and political deadlock. Their contribution to the achievement of self-government has largely been forgotten by subsequent generations, but independent India’s dedication to parliamentary democracy, economic development, and social progress stands as mute testimony to their farsighted wisdom.

The five men mentioned above—Naoroji, Banerjea, Ranade, Gokhale, and Dutt—were outstanding figures; but they did not represent, even among the educated, a fair spectrum of Indian society. This group of five included no Muslims, women, or members of the lower castes. Among the Muslims, the most famous—though often controversial within his own community as well as outside it—was Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan. He called for his Muslim brethren to boycott the Congress and work to improve their own lot, in partnership with their British rulers. But there were some Muslims throughout the nationalist era who did work in the Congress, and among them two were early Congress presidents. Extracts from the presidential addresses of Badruddin Tyabji and Rahmatullah M. Sayani, answering Sir Sayyid’s views, are presented here with their arguments for joining the Congress.

The era of the Moderate reformers in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century also saw women speaking out, and even a few moving up. Among these were Rokeya Hossain, a Bengali Muslim woman, Cornelia Sorabji, a Parsi Christian from Bombay, and Sarojini Naidu, a Hindu of Bengali background who grew up in Hyderabad. Rokeya Hossain achieved literacy with the help of a brother and her husband. Left a widow at a relatively early age, she continued her work in education and as a writer. Her fantasy of a women’s paradise with the men in purdah is presented in the pages of *Sultana’s Dream*, written in the early twentieth century. Another Indian woman during this era who struggled to win her way into new arenas was Cornelia Sorabji. After a series of setback and successes, she qualified as a legal practitioner by passing exams in Oxford and Bombay that were previously open only to men, and then she began to work out her own unique career. Selections from her 1934 memoir, *India Calling*, demonstrate that women had to overcome much higher hurdles than men, but were slowly entering public life nevertheless. Sarojini Naidu speaks more directly about the role of women in society, an issue on which she worked throughout her life as a poet and then as a political leader. Without the voices of women such as these,² our picture of ongoing Indian reform movements would be radically incomplete.

DADABHAI NAOROJI: ARCHITECT OF INDIAN NATIONALISM

The rise of Indian nationalism would have been impossible without the strenuous efforts of national leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, who drew up plans for, and laid the foundations of, India's self-government.

This architect of Indian nationalism was neither Hindu nor Muslim, but a descendant of the followers of Zoroaster who had fled Persia after the Muslim conquest of that country in the seventh century and who had arrived in India in the tenth century. Settling as refugees along the western coast of India, the Zoroastrians, or Parsis (Persians), emerged as a group most willing to do business with European traders. They were bound neither by caste rules nor by prejudice against taking interest on loans, and as a minority group they had little to lose and much to gain by dealing with the Europeans. Through their trading contacts, the Parsis became the most Westernized, and the wealthiest, single community in India.

Dadabhai Naoroji was born in Bombay in 1825, the son of a Zoroastrian priest. His family name, Dordi, was little used; but the original meaning of the word (a twisted rope made of coconut husk) had a symbolic significance for Dadabhai, who was absolutely inflexible once he had made up his mind. "You may burn a dordi," he once said, "but you can never take the twist out of it. So it is with me. When once I form a decision, nothing will dislodge me from it."³

Tenacity of purpose was indeed his chief characteristic. He so distinguished himself in his studies at Elphinstone (Bombay's leading college) that he became at twenty-seven its professor of mathematics—the first Indian to attain such an academic rank. At thirty he left India to become a partner in an Indian firm doing business in England. His aim in moving to London, the heart of the empire, was not to gain wealth, but to be able to appeal directly to the British public for a better understanding of India's problems. For fifty years Dadabhai delivered papers on Indian subjects to numerous learned societies, submitted memoranda and petitions to British officials concerned with India, and agitated both privately and publicly, all in the service of a single cause: that Indians should be granted the same rights as other British subjects.

With his famous theory of "the drain" of India's wealth to Britain, Dadabhai Naoroji sounded the keynote of Indian economic nationalism. But for all his bitter condemnation of the costliness of foreign government to his country, he never advocated violent action. His loyalty to the parliamentary system of government was rewarded in 1892 with his election to the British House of Commons on the Liberal ticket. The first Indian Member of Parliament, he served both his London constituency and the interests of India for three years, succeeding in his attempt to have a parliamentary commission investigate the financial administration of British India. He was also generous to young Indians who came to study in England in the 1860s, among whom were Surendranath Banerjea, W. C. Bonerjee, Romesh Chunder Dutt, and Badruddin Tyabji.

Dadabhai punctuated his long residence in England from 1856 onward with frequent visits to India. In 1873–1874 he served as chief minister to the Indian state of Baroda to prevent it from being annexed by the British crown (the usual penalty for misgovernment in the princely states). He took a prominent part in the first session of the Indian National Congress in 1885 and was thrice elected its president—in 1886, 1893, and 1906. The younger generation of nationalist leaders all looked up to the patriarchal patriot for advice, and both Gandhi and Jinnah revered him. He returned to India in 1907 for the last decade of his life and died in Bombay in 1917; to this day the affectionate title “the Grand Old Man of India” is associated with his name.

THE PROS AND CONS OF BRITISH RULE

In the discussion following the presentation of a paper on India to a learned society in London in 1871, Dadabhai drew up an account of the advantages and disadvantages to India of British rule. It showed both his fairness in recognizing the good the British had done, and his persistent criticism of the crushing cost to India of their rule.

Credit—*In the Cause of Humanity*: Abolition of suttee and infanticide.

Destruction of Dacoits, Thugs, Pindarees,⁴ and other such pests of Indian society.

Remarriage of Hindoo widows, and charitable aid in time of famine.

Glorious work all this, of which any nation may well be proud, and such as has not fallen to the lot of any people in the history of mankind.

In the Cause of Civilization: Education, both male and female. Though yet only partial, an inestimable blessing as far as it has gone, and leading gradually to the destruction of superstition, and many moral and social evils. Resuscitation of India's own noble literature, modified and refined by the enlightenment of the West.

The only pity is that as much has not been done as might have been in this noble work; but still India must be, and is, deeply grateful.

Politically: Peace and order. Freedom of speech and liberty of the press. Higher political knowledge and aspirations. Improvement of government in the native States. Security of life and property. Freedom from oppression caused by the caprice or avarice of despotic rulers, and from devastation by war. Equal justice between man and man (sometimes vitiated by partiality to Europeans). Services of highly educated administrators, who have achieved the above-mentioned good results.

Materially: Loans for railways and irrigation. (I have been particularly charged with ignoring this, but I consider it one of the greatest benefits you have conferred upon India, inasmuch as it has enabled us to produce more than we could before, though there is not yet enough for all India's ordinary wants, and I have said this

in my paper.) I cannot ascertain the exact amount of investments in irrigation works, but I take them to be about £10,000,000, making the total £110,000,000. The development of a few valuable products, such as indigo, tea, coffee, silk, &c. Increase of exports. Telegraphs.

Generally: A slowly growing desire of late to treat India equitably, and as a country held in trust. Good intentions.

No nation on the face of the earth has ever had the opportunity of achieving such a glorious work as this. . . . I appreciate, and so do my countrymen, what England has done for India, and I know that it is only in British hands that her regeneration can be accomplished. Now for the debit side.

Debit—*In the Cause of Humanity:* Nothing. Everything, therefore, is in your favor under this head.

In the Cause of Civilization: As I have said already, there has been a failure to do as much as might have been done, but I put nothing to the debit. Much has been done, or I should not be standing here this evening.

Politically: Repeated breach of pledges to give the natives a fair and reasonable share in the higher administration of their own country, which has much shaken confidence in the good faith of the British word. Political aspirations and the legitimate claim to have a reasonable voice in the legislation and the imposition and disbursement of taxes, met to a very slight degree, thus treating the natives of India not as British subjects, to whom representation is a birthright.

(I stop here . . . to say a word to Mr. Hyde Clarke . . . supposing that I desired the government of India to be at once transferred to the natives. In my belief a greater calamity could not befall India than for England to go away and leave her to herself.)

Consequent on the above, an utter disregard of the feelings and views of the natives. The great moral evil of the drain of the wisdom and practical administration and statesmanship, leaving none to guide the rising generation. (Here, again, have I been misunderstood. I complain not of Englishmen returning to their own country, but of the whole administration being kept entirely in English hands, so that none of the natives are brought up to and taught the responsibilities and duties of office, so that we have none amongst ourselves to guide us as our elders and to teach us our duties as citizens and as moral beings. . . .) The indifference to India, even of a large portion of those who have had an Indian career, and who are living on Indian pensions. The culpable indifference of a large portion of the people, the public press, and Parliament of this country to the interests of India; therefore, periodical committees of inquiry are absolutely necessary, for the knowledge that such will take place would be a check on careless administration. With regard to the native states, though their system is improving, it is most unjust that their cases should be decided in secret. The

frequent change of officials is a constant source of disturbance in policy, and though it may be unavoidable, it is none the less hard upon India.

Financially: All attention is engrossed in devising new modes of taxation, without any adequate effort to increase the means of the people to pay; and the consequent vexation and oppressiveness of the taxes imposed, imperial and local. Inequitable financial relations between England and India, i.e., the political debt of £100,000,000 clapped on India's shoulders, and all home charges also, though the British exchequer contributes nearly £3,000,000 to the expenses of the colonies. The crushing and economically rude and unintelligent policy of making the present generation pay the whole cost of public works for the benefit of the future, instead of making the political like all other machinery, and distributing the weight so as to make a small power lift a large weight by the aid of time. The results of trying to produce something out of nothing, of the want of intelligent adaptation of financial machinery, and of much reckless expenditure; ending in financial embarrassments, and deep discontent of the people.

Materially: The political drain,⁵ up to this time, from India to England, of above £500,000,000, at the lowest computation, in principal alone, which with interest would be some thousands of millions. The further continuation of this drain at the rate, at present, of above £12,000,000, with a tendency to increase. . . .

The consequent continuous impoverishment and exhaustion of the country, except so far as it has been very partially relieved and replenished by the railway and irrigation loans, and the windfall of the consequences of the American war, since 1850. Even with this relief, the material condition of India is such that the great mass of the poor people have hardly 2d. a day. . . .

The famines that were in their power to prevent, if they had done their duty, as a good and intelligent government. The policy adopted during the last fifteen years of building railways, irrigation works, etc., is hopeful, has already resulted in much good to your credit, and if persevered in, gratitude and contentment will follow.

Contra.— Increase of exports [without adequate compensation]; loss of manufacturing industry and skill. Here I end the debit side. . . .

To sum up the whole, the British rule has been—morally, a great blessing; politically peace and order on one hand, blunders on the other, materially, impoverishment (relieved as far as the railway and other loans go). The natives call the British system “Sakar ki Churi,” the knife of sugar. That is to say there is no oppression, it is all smooth and sweet, but it is the knife, notwithstanding. I mention this that you should know these feelings. Our great misfortune is that you do not know our wants. When you will know our real wishes, I have not the least doubt that you would do justice. The genius and spirit of the British people is fair play and justice. The great problems before the English statesmen are two. 1. To make the foreign rule self-supporting, either by returning to India, in some shape or other, the wealth that has been, and is being, drawn from it, or

by stopping that drain in some way till India is so far improved in its material condition as to be able to produce enough for its own ordinary wants and the extraordinary ones of a costly distant rule. If you cannot feel yourself actuated by the high and noble ambition of the amelioration of 200,000,000 of human beings let your self-interest suggest to you to take care of the bird that gives the golden egg of £12,000,000 a year to your nation, and provisions to thousands of your people of all classes. In the name of humanity, I implore our rulers to make up their minds not to prevent the restoration of the equilibrium, after the continuous exhaustion by drain and by horrible famines. I do not in the least grudge any legitimate benefit England may derive for its rule in India. On the contrary, I am thankful for its invaluable moral benefits; but it is the further duty of England to give us such a government, and all the benefit of its power and credit, as to enable us to pay, without starving or dying by famine, the tribute or price for the rule. 2. How to satisfy reasonably the growing political aspirations and just rights of a people called British subjects to have a fair share in the administration and legislation of their own country. If the Select Committee solve these two problems, before which all other difficulties, financial or others, are as nothing, they will deserve the blessings of 200,000,000 of the human race.

[From Naoroji, *Essays, Speeches, Addresses, and Writings*,
ed. Chunilal Lalubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton, 1887), 131–136.]

THE BLESSINGS OF BRITISH RULE

In 1886, fifteen years after the London paper, quoted above, Naoroji was elected president of the Indian National Congress. Hope in the Congress as a means for the future education and uplift of India imbued Naoroji with an optimistic air, and his assessment of British rule appears enthusiastic, even grateful.

The assemblage of such a Congress is an event of the utmost importance in Indian history. I ask whether in the most glorious days of Hindu rule, in the days of Rajahs like the great [ancient Indian king] Vikram, you could imagine the possibility of a meeting of this kind, where even Hindus of all different provinces of the kingdom could have collected and spoken as one nation. Coming down to the later empire of our friends, the Mahomedans, who probably ruled over a larger territory at one time than any Hindu monarch, would it have been, even in the days of the great Akbar himself, possible for a meeting like this to assemble composed of all classes and communities, all speaking one language, and all having uniform and high aspirations of their own?

Well, then, what is it for which we are now met on this occasion? We have assembled to consider questions upon which depend our future, whether glorious or inglorious. It is our good fortune that we are under a rule which makes it

possible for us to meet in this manner. [*Cheers.*] It is under the civilizing rule of the Queen and people of England that we meet here together, hindered by none, and are freely allowed to speak our minds without the least fear and without the least hesitation. Such a thing is possible under British rule and British rule only. [*Loud cheers.*] Then I put the question plainly: Is this Congress a nursery for sedition and rebellion against the British Government [*cries of "no, no"*]; or is it another stone in the foundation of that stability of that Government [*cries of "yes, yes"*]? . . . But there remain even greater blessings for which we have to be grateful. It is to British rule that we owe the education we possess; the people of England were sincere in the declarations made more than half a century ago that India was a sacred charge entrusted to their care by Providence, and that they were bound to administer it for the good of India, to the glory of their own name, and the satisfaction of God. . . .

Let us speak out like men and proclaim that we are loyal to the backbone [*cheers*]; that we understand the benefits English rule has conferred upon us; that we thoroughly appreciate the education that has been given to us, the new light which has been poured upon us, turning us from darkness into light and teaching us the new lesson that kings are made for the people, not people for their kings; and this new lesson we have learned amidst the darkness of Asiatic despotism only by the light of free English civilization. [*Loud cheers.*]

[From Naoroji's presidential address to second Congress session, 1886, in Naoroji, *Essays, Speeches, Addresses, and Writings*, 332–333.]

THE MORAL IMPOVERISHMENT OF INDIA

The frustration felt by the swelling ranks of educated Indians who were excluded from government positions is well expressed in Dadabhai's memorandum of 1880. Note the veiled threat with which this selection concludes.

In this Memorandum I desire to submit for the kind and generous consideration of . . . the Secretary of State for India, that from the same cause of the deplorable drain, besides the material exhaustion of India, the moral loss to her is no less sad and lamentable.

With the material wealth go also the wisdom and experience of the country. Europeans occupy almost all the higher places in every department of government, directly or indirectly under its control. While in India they acquire India's money, experience, and wisdom, and when they go, they carry both away with them, leaving India so much poorer in material and moral wealth. . . .

Every European is isolated from the people around him. He is not their mental, moral or social leader, or companion. For any mental or moral influence or guidance or sympathy with the people, he might just as well be living in the moon. The people know not him, and he knows not, nor cares for the people. Some honorable exceptions do, now and then, make an effort to do some good

they can, but in the very nature of things, these efforts are always feeble, exotic, and of little permanent effect. . . .

The Europeans are not the natural leaders of the people. They do not belong to the people. They cannot enter into their thoughts and feelings; they cannot join or sympathize with their joys or griefs. On the contrary, every day the estrangement is increasing. Europeans deliberately and openly widen it more and more. There may be very few social institutions started by Europeans in which natives, however fit and desirous to join, are not deliberately and insultingly excluded. The Europeans are and make themselves strangers in every way. All they effectually do is to eat the substance of India, material and moral, while living there, and when they go, they carry away all they have acquired, and their pensions and future usefulness besides.

This most deplorable moral loss to India needs most serious consideration, as much in its political as in its national aspect. Nationally disastrous as it is, it carries politically with it its own nemesis. Without the guidance of elderly wisdom and experience of their own natural leaders, the education which the rising generations are now receiving is naturally leading them (or call it misleading them, if you will) into directions which bode no good to the rulers, and which, instead of being the strength of the rulers as it ought to and can be, will turn out to be their great weakness. The fault will be of the rulers themselves for such a result. The power that is now being raised by the spread of education, though yet slow and small, is one that in time must, for weal or woe, exercise great influence. In fact it has already begun to do so. However strangely the English rulers, forgetting their English manliness and moral courage, may, like the ostrich, shut their eyes by gagging acts or otherwise, to the good or bad influences they are raising around them, this good or evil is rising nevertheless. The thousands that are being sent out by the universities every year find themselves in a most anomalous position. There is no place for them in their motherland. They may beg in the streets or break stones on the roads, for aught the rulers seem to care for their natural rights, position, and duties in their own country. They may perish or do what they like or can, but scores of Europeans must go from this country to take up what belongs to them, and that, in spite of every profession for years and years past and up to the present day, of English statesmen, that they must govern India for India's good, by solemn acts and declarations of Parliament, and above all, by the words of the August Sovereign Herself. For all practical purposes all these high promises have been hitherto, almost wholly, the purest romance, the reality being quite different.

The educated find themselves simply so many dummies, ornamented with the tinsel of school education, and then their whole end and aim of life is ended. What must be the inevitable consequence? A wild, spirited horse, without curb or reins, will run away wild, and kill and trample upon every one that came in his way. A misdirected force will hit anywhere and destroy anything. The power that the rulers are, so far to their credit, raising, will, as a nemesis

recoil against themselves, if with this blessing of education they do not do their whole duty to the country which trusts to their righteousness, and thus turn this good power to their own side. The nemesis is as clear from the present violence to nature, as disease and death arise from uncleanness and rottenness. The voice of the power of the rising education is, no doubt, feeble at present . . . but it is growing. Heaven only knows what it will grow to! He who runs may see, that if the present material and moral destruction of India continued, a great convulsion must inevitably arise, by which either India will be more and more crushed under the iron heel of despotism and destruction, or may succeed in shattering the destroying hand and power. Far, far is it from my earnest prayer and hope that such should be the result of the British rule.

[From Naoroji, *Essays, Speeches, Addresses, and Writings*, 465–467.]

SIR SURENDRANATH BANERJEA: BENGALI MODERATE

The Hindu Renaissance, a cultural efflorescence in nineteenth-century Bengal, was accompanied by a gradual political awakening in that province. Modern-style participatory politics, however, came as a comparatively new category to Bengalis after centuries of domination by Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim rulers. Following the example set by Rammohan Roy, a growing number of men emerged from the English-speaking middle class, infused by their Western-style education with new ideals of patriotism, public service, and civic involvement.

To this group Allan Octavian Hume appealed with his letter of 1883, addressing the graduates of Calcutta University. “You are the salt of the land,” he wrote. “And if amongst even you, the elite, fifty men cannot be found with sufficient power of self-sacrifice, sufficient love for and pride in their country, sufficient genuine and unselfish heart-felt patriotism to take the initiative, and if needs be, devote the rest of their lives to the Cause—then there is no hope for India.”⁶

To one Calcutta University graduate, Hume’s appeal was entirely superfluous, for Surendranath Banerjea (1848–1925) had already cast himself into the stormy sea of national service. A Brahman and the son of a doctor, Surendranath had been one of the first Indians to be admitted to the select Indian Civil Service, the “steel frame” of British administration; but his failure to correct a false report prepared in his name by a subordinate had caused him to be dismissed—a punishment far more severe than English members of the I.C.S. received for similar oversights. Undaunted, Surendranath journeyed to London to appeal his case. When the appeal was denied, he appeared for the bar examination, only to be refused again. With the two swiftest roads to success—the civil service and the law—closed to him, Surendranath returned to Calcutta, convinced that “the personal wrong done to me was an illustration of the helpless impotency of our people” and determined to spend his life “redressing our wrongs and protecting our rights, personal and collective.”⁷

The rest of his long life was only the acting out of this resolve. Starting as a teacher, he soon founded a patriotic association, then a newspaper, then a college. Just as Keshab Chandra Sen had captivated audiences in many parts of the land with his revivalist sermons, so Surendranath used his oratorical gifts to rouse Indians, from Bengal to the Punjab, to a greater sense of loyalty to their country. When he was jailed for criticizing a British judge, he started the tradition of welcoming imprisonment in order to demonstrate the injustice of a governmental law or policy.

Surendranath's career dramatizes the change of heart in countless educated Indians—from blind loyalty to British rule, to stubborn resistance against its evils. Despite his sufferings at the hands of the authorities, Surendranath insisted that only constitutional means be used in the struggle for self-government. When the Extremists cried for more drastic measures against the foreigner, he opposed them as firmly as he opposed the British. Twice president of the Congress, he left it in 1918 to head the All-India Liberal Federation when the younger Congress leaders threatened to obstruct the introduction of the important Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. His persistence in his chosen course earned him the respect of Indians and British alike, and won him the aptly coined nickname of “Surrender-not” Banerjea.

Under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, or Government of India Act of 1919, “diarchy” (the division of provincial departments into two categories) was implemented. In the transferred departments, Indian ministers were to be in charge. So Surendranath Banerjea, in his last years, became “Minister for Local Self-Government” and saw to the passing of the Calcutta Municipal (Reform) Act in 1923. This allowed one group of Indian nationalists, the Swarajists, who were trying to use the reforms for their purposes, to gain election to the mayor's seat in the Calcutta Corporation (city government). Although Banerjea was now an opponent of these nationalists, led by C. R. Das, the former's actions allowed Das to become the mayor of Calcutta. Shortly before his death in 1925, Banerjea completed his valuable autobiography, *A Nation in Making*.

THE NEED FOR INDIAN UNITY

Understanding between Hindus and Muslims formed a major plank in the Moderates' platform. In one of Surendranath's earliest speeches (in 1878) he exhorted the young men of the country to strive for unity as a patriotic duty.

Young men, whom I see around me in such large numbers, you are the hopes of your country; your country expects great things from you. Now I ask, how many of you are prepared, when you have finished your studies at the college, to devote your lives, to consecrate your energies to the good of your country? I repeat the question and I pause for a reply. [*Here the speaker paused for a few seconds. Cries of “all, all” from all sides of the gallery.*] The response is in every way worthy of yourselves and of the education which you are receiving. May you prove true to your resolve. . . .

Gentlemen, I have a strong conviction and an assured belief that there comes a time in the history of a nation's progress, when every man may verily be said to have a mission of his own to accomplish. Such a time has now arrived for India. . . . Every Indian must now do his duty, or stand condemned before God and man. There was such a time of stirring activity in the glorious annals of England, when Hampden offered up his life for the deliverance of his own country, when Algernon Sydney laid down his head on the block to rid his country of a hated tyrant. . . . It is not indeed necessary for us to have recourse to violence in order to obtain the redress of our grievances. Constitutional agitation will secure for us those rights, the privileges which in less favoured countries are obtained by sterner means. But peaceful as are the means to be enforced, there is a stern duty to be performed by every Indian. . . .

In holding up for your acceptance the great principle of Indian unity, I do not lay claims to originality. Three hundred years ago, in the Punjab, the immortal founder of Sikhism, the meek, the gentle, the blessed Nanak preached the great doctrine of Indian unity and endeavoured to knit together Hindus and Musulmans under the banner of a common faith. That attempt was eminently successful. Nanak became the spiritual founder of the Sikh Empire. He preached the great doctrine of peace and good will between Hindus and Musulmans. And standing in the presence of his great example, we too must preach the great doctrine of peace and good will between Hindus and Musulmans, Christians and Parsees, aye between all sections of the great Indian community. Let us raise aloft the banner of our country's progress. Let the word "Unity" be inscribed there in characters of glittering gold. We have had enough of past jealousies, past dissensions, past animosities. The spirits of the dead at Paniput⁸ will testify to our bloody strifes. The spirits of the dead in other battlefields will testify to the same fact. There may be religious differences between us. There may be social differences between us. But there is a common platform where we may all meet, the platform of our country's welfare. There is a common cause which may bind us together, the cause of Indian progress. There is a common country. . . . Let us all, Hindus, Musulmans, Christians, Parsees, members of the great Indian community, throw the pall of oblivion over jealousies and dissensions of by-gone times and embracing one another in fraternal love and affection, live and work for the benefit of a beloved Fatherland. Under English auspices there is indeed a great future for India. I am confident of the great destinies that are in store for us. . . . Let us all lead worthy, honorable, and patriotic lives, that we may all live and die happily and that India may be great. This is my earnest and prayerful request.

[From Banerjea, *Speeches of Surendra Nath Banerjea*
(Calcutta: Indian Association, 1970), 48–50.]

FAITH IN ENGLAND

Basic to the Moderates' creed was faith that the British would grant self-government to India when she was prepared for it. Surendranath enunciated this creed in his presidential address to the Congress in 1895.

We feel that in this great struggle in which we are engaged, the moral sympathies of civilized humanity are with us. The prayers of the good and the true in all parts of the world follow us. They will welcome as glad tidings of great joy the birth of an emancipated people on the banks of the Ganges. For, have they not all read about our ancient civilization; how, in the morning of the world, before the Eternal City had been built upon the Seven Hills, before Alexander had marched his army to the banks of the Tigris . . . our ancestors had developed a great civilization, and how that civilization has profoundly influenced the course of modern thought in the highest concerns of man? Above all, we rely with unbounded confidence on the justice and generosity of the British people and of their representatives in Parliament. . . .

Nevertheless we feel that much yet remains to be done, and the impetus must come from England. To England we look for inspiration and guidance. To England we look for sympathy in the struggle. From England must come the crowning mandate which will enfranchise our peoples. England is our political guide and our moral preceptor in the exalted sphere of political duty. English history has taught us those principles of freedom which we cherish with our lifeblood. We have been fed upon the strong food of English constitutional freedom. . . . We have been brought face to face with the struggles and the triumphs of the English people in their stately march towards constitutional freedom. . . . Where will you find better models of courage, devotion, and sacrifice; not in Rome, not in Greece, not even in France in the stormy days of the Revolution—courage tempered by caution, enthusiasm leavened by sobriety, partisanship softened by a large-hearted charity—all subordinated to the one predominating sense of love of country and love of God.

We should be unworthy of ourselves and of our preceptors—we should, indeed, be something less than human—if, with our souls stirred to their inmost depths, our warm Oriental sensibilities roused to an unwonted pitch of enthusiasm by the contemplation of these great ideals of public duty, we did not seek to transplant into our own country the spirit of those free institutions which have made England what she is. In the words of Lord Lansdowne, a wave of unrest is passing through this country. But it is not the unrest of discontent or disloyalty to the British government, it is the unrest which is the first visible sign of the awakening of a new national life. It is the work of Englishmen, it is the noblest monument of their rule, it is the visible embodiment of the vast moral influence which they are exercising over the minds of the people of India. Never in the history of the world have the inheritors of an ancient civilization been so

profoundly influenced by the influx of modern ideas. In this Congress from year to year we ask England to accomplish her glorious work. The course of civilization following the path of the sun has traveled from East to West. The West owes a heavy debt to the East. We look forward to the day when that debt will be repaid, not only by the moral regeneration, but by the political enfranchisement of our people.

[From Banerjea, *Speeches*, 142–144.]

FAITH IN SOCIAL PROGRESS

In concluding his memoirs in his old age, Surendranath looked back at the changes that had taken place in Hindu society during his lifetime, and reiterated the faith in gradual reform that is one of the hallmarks of a Moderate.

I feel that, if we have to advance in social matters, we must, so far as practicable, take the community with us by a process of steady and gradual uplift, so that there may be no sudden disturbance or dislocation, the new being adapted to the old, and the old assimilated to the new. That has been the normal path of progress in Hindu society through the long centuries. It would be idle to contend that Hindu society is today where it was two hundred years ago. It moves slowly, perhaps more slowly than many would wish, but in the words of Galileo[,], “it does move,” more or less according to the lines of adaptation that I have indicated. The question of sea-voyage, or child-marriage, or even enforced widowhood, is not today where it was in the latter part of the last century. Fifty years ago I was an outcaste (being an England-returned Brahmin) in the village where I live. Today I am an honoured member of the community. My public services have, perhaps, partly contributed to the result. But they would have been impotent, as in the case of Raja Ram Mohun Roy for many long years after his death, if they were not backed by the slow, the silent, the majestic forces of progress, working noiselessly but irresistibly in the bosom of society, helping on the fruition of those ideas which have been sown in the public mind. Remarkable indeed have been, in many respects, the relaxations and the removal of restrictions of caste. Dining with non-Hindus, which was an abomination not many years ago, is now connived at, if not openly countenanced. A still more forward step towards loosening the bonds of caste has been taken within the last few years. The barriers of marriage between some subcastes have been relaxed, and marriages between hitherto prohibited subcastes of Brahmins and Kayasthas are not infrequent, and I have had some personal share in this reform. Beneficent are the activities of the Brahmo Samaj, but behind them is the slower but larger movement of the general community, all making towards progress.

[From Banerjea, *A Nation in Making: Being the Reminiscences of Fifty Years in Public Life* (1925; Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1963), 368–369.]

MAHADEV GOVIND RANADE: ECONOMIC PROPOSALS

In chapter 3 Ranade was introduced as a social reformer. Here in chapter 4, we will consider his views on economic issues.

INDIA'S NEED: STATE GUIDANCE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In his essay of 1892 on "Indian Political Economy," Ranade showed that English *laissez-faire* doctrines were being challenged by more recent theories in political economy, and that the former were not necessarily relevant to India's problems. He then continued with a diagnosis of the Indian economy and proposals for change.

This resumé of the past and contemporary history of the growth of Economic Sciences in England, France, Germany, Italy, and America will satisfy the student that modern European thought does not at all countenance the view of the English writers of the Ricardian School, that the Principles of the Science, as they have enunciated them in their Text Books, are universally and necessarily true for all times and places, and for all stages of Advancement. Modern Thought is veering to the conclusion that the Individual and his Interests are not the centre round which the Theory should revolve, that the true center is the Body Politic of which that Individual is a Member, and that Collective Defense and Well-being, Social Education and Discipline, and the Duties, and not merely the Interests, of men, must be taken into account, if the Theory is not to be merely Utopian. The Method to be followed is not the Deductive but the Historical Method, which takes account of the past in its forecast of the future; and Relativity, and not Absoluteness, characterizes the conclusions of Economical Science. There are those who seek to get over this difficulty by differentiating the Science from what they are disposed to call the Art of Economy. This divorce of Theory and Practice is, however, a mischievous error, which relegates the Science to the sterility of an ideal dream or a puzzle. . . . The subject itself . . . is best studied historically and not deductively, the actual Practice of the most Civilized Nations and the history of the growth of its Theory given above alike establish the Doctrine of Relativity, and the predominant claim of Collective Welfare over Individual Interests, as the principal features in which the highest minds of the present day chiefly differ from the Economical Writers of the Old School, with their *a priori* conclusions based on individual self-interest and unrestricted competition.

We have next to consider the bearings of this enlarged view of the Science in its Indian aspects. The characteristics of our Social Life are the prevalence of Status over Contract, of Combination over Competition. Our habits of mind

are conservative to a fault. The aptitudes of climate and soil facilitate the production of raw materials. Labor is cheap and plentiful, but unsteady, unthrifty, and unskilled. Capital is scarce, immobile, and unenterprising. Cooperation on a large scale of either Capital or Labor is unknown. Agriculture is the chief support of nearly the whole population, and this Agriculture is carried on under conditions of uncertain rainfall. Commerce and Manufactures on a large scale are but recent importations, and all industry is carried on, on the system of petty farming, retail dealing, and job working by poor people on borrowed capital. There is an almost complete absence of a landed gentry or wealthy middle class. The land is a monopoly of the State. The desire for accumulation is very weak, peace and security having been almost unknown over large areas for any length of time till within the last Century. Our Laws and Institutions favour a low standard of life, and encourage subdivision and not concentration of Wealth. The religious ideals of life condemn the ardent pursuit of wealth as a mistake to be avoided as far as possible. These are old legacies and inherited weaknesses. Stagnation and dependence, depression and poverty—these are written in broad characters on the face of the land and its people. To these must be added the economical drain of wealth and talents, which Foreign subjection has entailed on the country. As a compensation against all these depressing influences, we have to set off the advantage of a free contact with a race which has opened the Country to the Commerce of the world, and by its superior skill and resources has developed communications in a way previously unknown. If we wish to realize our situation fully, we may not overlook this factor, because, it represents the beam of light which alone illumines the prevailing darkness. It cannot well be a mere accident that the destinies of this Country have been entrusted to the guidance of a Nation whose characteristic strength is opposed to all our weaknesses, whose enterprise, chiefly in Commerce and Manufactures, knows no bounds, whose Capital overflows the world, among whom Contract has largely superseded Status, and Competition and Co-Operation play a predominant part, whose view of life is full of hope, and whose powers of organization have never been surpassed.

[Ranade next advanced several reasons why industrial enterprise should be encouraged, and urged government action to populate unfilled lands, protect peasants against excessive taxation, and prevent exploitation by landlords or moneylenders. He argued that the state should play a more active role in the economic development of the country.]

Lastly comes the great department of Governmental interference. The meddlesomeness of the Mercantile System provoked a reaction against State Control and Guidance towards the end of the last century in favor of Natural Liberty. The Doctrines of this Negative School have now in their turn been abused by a too logical extension of its principles. There is a decided reaction in Europe against the *laissez faire* system. Even in England, the recent Factory Legislation, the qualified recognition by law of Trades-Unionism, the Poor Law

System, and the Irish Land Settlement, are all instances which indicate the same change of view. Speaking roughly, the province of State Interference and Control is practically being extended so as to restore the good points of the mercantile system without its absurdities. The State is now more and more recognized as the National Organ for taking care of National needs in all matters in which individual and cooperative efforts are not likely to be so effective and economic as National effort. This is the correct view to take of the true functions of a State. To relegate them to the simple duty of maintaining peace and order is really to deprive the Community of many of the advantages of the Social Union. Education, both Liberal and Technical, Post and Telegraphs, Railway and Canal Communications, the pioneering of new enterprise, the insurance of risky undertakings—all these functions are usefully discharged by the State. The question is one of time, fitness, and expediency, not one of liberty and rights. In our own Country the State has similarly enlarged its functions with advantage. The very fact that the Rulers belong to a race with superior advantages imposes this duty on them of attempting things which no Native Rulers, past or present, could as well achieve, or possibly even think of. This obligation is made more peremptory by the fact that the State claims to be the sole Landlord, and is certainly the largest Capitalist in the Country. While the State in India has done much in this way in the working of Iron and Coal fields, and in the experiments made about Cotton and Tobacco, and in Tea and Coffee and Cinchona Plantations, it must be admitted that, as compared with its resources and the needs of the Country, these attempts are as nothing by the side of what has been attempted with success in France, Germany, and other countries, but which, unhappily, has not been attempted in this country. Even if political considerations forbid independent action in the matter of differential duties, the pioneering of new enterprises is a duty which the Government might more systematically undertake with advantage. In truth, there is no difference of principle between lending such support and guidance, by the free use of its Credit and superior Organization, in pioneering Industrial Undertaking or subsidizing private Co-operative effort, and its guaranteeing minimum interest to Railway Companies. The building up of National, not merely State, Credit on broad foundations by helping people to acquire confidence in a free and largely ramified Banking system, so advantageously worked in Europe under different forms, has also not been attempted here. There is, lastly, the duty cast on it of utilizing indigenous resources, and organizing them in a way to produce in India in State Factories all products of skill which the State Departments require in the way of Stores. These are only a few of the many directions in which, far more than Exchange and Frontier difficulties, the highest Statesmanship will have a field all its own for consideration and action. They will, no doubt, receive such consideration if only the minds of the Rulers were once thoroughly freed from the fear of offending the so-called maxims of rigid Economical Science. It is time that a new departure should take place in this connection, and

it is with a view to drawing public attention to this necessity that I have ventured to place before you the results of modern economic Thought. In this, as in other matters, the conditions of Indian life are more faithfully reproduced in some of the Continental Countries and in America than in happy England, proud of its position, strong in its insularity, and the home of the richest and busiest Community in the modern industrial World. If the attempt I have made leads to a healthy and full discussion of the change of policy I advocate, I shall regard myself amply repaid for my trouble.

[From Ranade, *Essays on Indian Economics: A Collection of Essays and Speeches* (Bombay: Thacker, 1898), 20–23, 31–34.]

HINDU–MUSLIM COOPERATION

In his speech to the Indian Social Conference of 1899, Ranade stressed the importance of religious toleration, suggesting that the members of each community avoid mutual recriminations; they should instead cooperate in the work of social reform.

If the lessons of the past have any value, one thing is quite clear, *viz.*, that in this vast country no progress is possible unless both Hindus and Mahomedans join hands together, and are determined to follow the lead of the men who flourished in Akbar's time and were his chief advisers and councillors, and sedulously avoid the mistakes which were committed by his great-grandson Aurangzeb. Joint action from a sense of common interest, and a common desire to bring about the fusion of the thoughts and feelings of men so as to tolerate small differences and bring about concord—these were the chief aims kept in view by Akbar and formed the principle of the new divine faith formulated in the *Din-i-ilahi*. Every effort on the part of either Hindus or Mahomedans to regard their interests as separated and distinct, and every attempt made by the two communities to create separate schools and interests among themselves, and not to heal up the wounds inflicted by mutual hatred of caste and creed, must be deprecated on all hands. It is to be feared that this lesson has not been sufficiently kept in mind by the leaders of both communities in their struggle for existence and in the acquisition of power and predominance during recent years. There is at times a great danger of the work of Akbar being undone by losing sight of this great lesson which the history of his reign and that of his two successors is so well calculated to teach. The Conference which brings us together is especially intended for the propagation of this “*din*”⁹ or “*dharma*,” and it is in connection with that message chiefly that I have ventured to speak to you today on this important subject. The ills that we are suffering from are most of them self-inflicted evils, the cure of which is to a large extent in our own hands. Looking at the series of measures which Akbar adopted in his time to cure these evils, one feels how correct was his vision when he and his advisers put their hand on those very defects in our national character which need to be remedied first

before we venture on higher enterprises. Pursuit of high ideas, mutual sympathy and cooperation, perfect tolerance, a correct understanding of the diseases from which the body politic is suffering, and an earnest desire to apply suitable remedies—this is the work cut out for the present generation. The awakening has commenced, as is witnessed by the fact that we are met in this place from such distances for joint consultation and action. All that is needed is that we must put our hands to the plow, and face the strife and the struggle. The success already achieved warrants the expectation that if we persevere on right lines, the goal we have in view may be attained. That goal is not any particular advantage to be gained in power and wealth. It is represented by the efforts to attain it, the expansion and the evolution of the heart and the mind, which will make us stronger and braver, purer and truer men. . . . Both Hindus and Mahomedans have their work cut out in this struggle. In the backwardness of female education, in the disposition to overleap the bounds of their own religion, in matters of temperance, in their internal dissensions between castes and creeds, in the indulgence of impure speech, thought, and action on occasions when they are disposed to enjoy themselves, in the abuses of many customs in regard to unequal and polygamous marriages, in the desire to be extravagant in their expenditure on such occasions, in the neglect of regulated charity, in the decay of public spirit in insisting on the proper management of endowments—in these and other matters both communities are equal sinners, and there is thus much ground for improvement on common lines. Of course, the Hindus, being by far the majority of the population, have other difficulties of their own to combat with; and they are trying in their gatherings of separate castes and communities to remedy them each in their own way. But without cooperation and conjoint action of all communities, success is not possible, and it is on that account that the general Conference is held in different places each year to rouse local interest, and help people in their separate efforts by a knowledge of what their friends similarly situated are doing in other parts.

[From C. Y. Chintamani, *Indian Social Reform*
(Madras: Thompson, 1901), 2:122–124.]

GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE: SERVANT OF INDIA

The work of reform begun by Ranade was ably continued by his younger friend and colleague Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866–1915). Sprung from the same proud Maharashtrian stock, both leaders clung to the policy of cooperation with the government and of moderate opposition to its evils. Gokhale, however, had to endure the merciless attacks of the Extremists during a stormy decade of Indian politics.

Gokhale dedicated his life to public service at the age of nineteen, on his graduation from Elphinstone College, by joining the Deccan Education Society in Poona. Members of this society took a vow of poverty for twenty years in order to devote their time exclusively to educating their fellow-countrymen. For his part, Gokhale became

a teacher of English and mathematics in the Fergusson College, which was founded by the society in 1885. He soon met Justice Ranade and began his long and fruitful apprenticeship under him—examining documents, weighing evidence, analyzing fiscal data, and preparing comprehensive memoranda on public questions.

Gokhale attracted public attention with the sagacity of his carefully prepared speeches, and in 1899 was elected a member of the recently formed Legislative Council for the state of Bombay. When only thirty-six, he became the Indian representative of this state on the Imperial Legislative Council, which despite its limited powers was the highest law-making body in India. For the last thirteen years of his life he wore himself out with his efforts to secure government cooperation in granting much-needed financial and administrative reforms for India. “No taxation without representation” was the essence of his demand, and his annual speeches on the imperial budget wrung many concessions from harassed ministers of finance.

In 1905 Gokhale founded the Servants of India Society in Poona, modeling it after the lay and monastic orders of the Catholic Church. Famine relief, education, Hindu-Muslim unity, and the elevation of the lowest castes were among the fields in which it carried on the work begun by its founder. Gokhale also took great interest in the problems of Indian emigrants to South Africa, giving freely of his advice and encouragement to their leader, M. K. Gandhi. Although bitterly reviled by Tilak and other supporters of violent action to end foreign rule, Gokhale’s readiness to cooperate with the British in introducing gradual reforms helped to pave the way for the eventual peaceful transfer of power to an independent India.

TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION

Soon after taking his place in the Imperial Legislative Council, Gokhale made the first of his annual budget speeches. His attacks on the government’s taxation policy are representative of the Moderates’ preoccupation with the economic shortcomings of British rule.

Your Excellency, I fear I cannot conscientiously join in the congratulations which have been offered to the Hon’ble Finance Member on the huge surplus which the revised estimates show for the last year. A surplus of seven crores¹⁰ of rupees is perfectly unprecedented in the history of Indian finance, and coming as it does on the top of a series of similar surpluses realized when the country has been admittedly passing through very trying times, it illustrates to my mind in a painfully clear manner the utter absence of a due correspondence between the condition of the people and the condition of the finances of the country. Indeed, my Lord, the more I think about this matter the more I feel—and I trust Your Lordship will pardon me for speaking somewhat bluntly—that these surpluses constitute a double wrong to the community. They are a wrong in the first instance in that they exist at all—that government should take so much more from the people than is needed in times of serious depression and suffer-

ing; and they are also a wrong, because they lend themselves to easy misinterpretation and, among other things, render possible the phenomenal optimism of the Secretary of State for India, who seems to imagine that all is for the best in this best of lands. A slight examination of these surpluses suffices to show that they are mainly, almost entirely, currency surpluses, resulting from the fact that government still maintain the same high level of taxation which they considered to be necessary to secure financial equilibrium when the rupee stood at its lowest. . . .

A taxation so forced as not only to maintain *a budgetary equilibrium* but to yield as well “large, continuous, progressive surpluses”—even in years of trial and suffering—is, I submit, against all accepted canons of finance. . . . In India, where the economic side of such questions finds such scant recognition, and the principle of meeting the charges of the year with the resources of the year is carried to a logical extreme, the anxiety of the Financial Administration is not only to make both ends meet in good and bad years alike, but to present large surpluses year after year. . . . Taxation for financial equilibrium is what we all can understand, but taxation kept up in the face of the difficulties and misfortunes of a period of excessive depression and for “large, continuous and progressive surpluses” is evidently a matter which requires justification. . . . [It is] a result not of a normal expansion of fiscal resources but of a forced up and heavy taxation . . . , a clear proof of the fact that the level of national taxation is kept unjustifiably high, even when government are in a position to lower that level.

[From Gokhale, *Speeches of Gopal Krishna Gokhale*, 3rd ed. (1908; Madras: Natesan, 1920), 1–2, 6–8.]

IMPROVING THE LOT OF LOW-CASTE HINDUS

One of Gokhale’s chief concerns in the realm of social reform was the lot of the “Untouchables.” The appeal launched in this 1903 speech was continued by Gandhi’s devotion to their cause.

Mr. President and Gentlemen: The proposition which has been entrusted to me runs thus—“That this Conference holds that the present degraded condition of the low castes is, in itself and from the national point of view, unsatisfactory, and is of opinion that every well-wisher of the country should consider it his duty to do all he can to raise their moral and social condition by trying to rouse self-respect in these classes and placing facilities for education and employment within their reach.”

Gentlemen, I hope I am not given to the use of unnecessarily strong language and yet I must say that this resolution is not as strongly worded as it should have been. The condition of the low castes—it is painful to call them low castes—is not only unsatisfactory as this resolution says, it is so deeply deplorable that it constitutes a grave blot on our social arrangements; and, further,

the attitude of our educated men towards this class is profoundly painful and humiliating. I do not propose to deal with this subject as an antiquarian; I only want to make a few general observations from the standpoint of justice, humanity, and national self-interest. . . . It is absolutely monstrous that a class of human beings, with bodies similar to our own, with brains that can think and with hearts that can feel, should be perpetually condemned to a low life of utter wretchedness, servitude, and mental and moral degradation, and that permanent barriers should be placed in their way so that it should be impossible for them ever to overcome them and improve their lot. This is deeply revolting to our sense of justice. I believe one has only to put oneself mentally into their place to realize how grievous this injustice is. We may touch a cat, we may touch a dog, we may touch any other animal, but the touch of these human beings is pollution! And so complete is now the mental degradation of these people that they themselves . . . acquiesce in it as though nothing better than that was their due.

I remember a speech delivered seven or eight years ago by the late Mr. Ranade in Bombay, under the auspices of the Hindu Union Club. That was a time when public feeling ran high in India on the subject of the treatment which our people were receiving in South Africa. Our friend, Mr. Gandhi, had come here on a brief visit from South Africa and he was telling us how our people were treated in Natal and Cape Colony and the Transvaal—how they were not allowed to walk on footpaths or travel in first-class carriages on the railway, how they were not admitted into hotels, and so forth. Public feeling, in consequence, was deeply stirred, and we all felt that it was a mockery that we should be called British subjects, when we were treated like this in Great Britain's colonies. . . . It was Mr. Ranade's peculiar greatness that he always utilized occasions of excitement to give a proper turn to the national mind and cultivate its sense of proportion. And so, when every one was expressing himself in indignant terms about the treatment which our countrymen were receiving in South Africa, Mr. Ranade came forward to ask if we had no sins of our own to answer for in that direction. . . . [His exhortation] was "Turn the searchlight inwards," or some such thing. . . . He began in characteristic fashion, expressing deep sympathy with the Indians in South Africa in the struggle they were manfully carrying on. He rejoiced that the people of India had awakened to a sense of the position of their countrymen abroad, and he felt convinced that this awakening was a sign of the fact that the dead bones in the valley were once again becoming instinct with life. But he proceeded to ask—Was this sympathy with the oppressed and downtrodden Indians to be confined to those of our countrymen only who had gone out of India? Or was it to be general and to be extended to all cases where there was oppression and injustice? It was easy, he said, to denounce foreigners, but those who did so were bound in common fairness to look into themselves and see if they were absolutely blameless in the matter. He then described the manner in which members of low caste were treated by our

own community in different parts of India. It was a description which filled the audience with feelings of deep shame and pain and indignation. . . . This question, therefore, is, in the first place, a question of sheer justice.

Next, as I have already said, it is a question of humanity. It is sometimes urged that if we have our castes, the people in the West have their classes, and after all, there is not much difference between the two. A little reflection will, however, show that the analogy is quite fallacious. The classes of the West are a perfectly elastic institution, and not rigid or cast-iron like our castes. Mr. Chamberlain, who is the most masterful personage in the British empire today, was at one time a shoemaker and then a screwmaker. Of course, he did not make shoes himself, but that was the trade by which he made money. Mr. Chamberlain today dines with royalty, and mixes with the highest in the land on terms of absolute equality. Will a shoemaker ever be able to rise in India in the social scale in a similar fashion, no matter how gifted by nature he might be? A great writer has said that castes are eminently useful for the preservation of society, but that they are utterly unsuited for purposes of progress. And this I think is perfectly true. If you want to stand where you were a thousand years ago, the system of castes need not be modified in any material degree. If, however, you want to emerge out of the slough in which you have long remained sunk, it will not do for you to insist on a rigid adherence to caste. Modern civilization has accepted greater equality for all as its watchword, as against privilege and exclusiveness, which were the root-ideas of the old world. And the larger humanity of these days requires that we should acknowledge its claims by seeking the amelioration of the helpless condition of our downtrodden countrymen.

Finally, gentlemen, this is a question of national self-interest. How can we possibly realize our national aspirations, how can our country ever hope to take her place among the nations of the world, if we allow large numbers of our countrymen to remain sunk in ignorance, barbarism, and degradation? Unless these men are gradually raised to a higher level, morally and intellectually, how can they possibly understand our thoughts or share our hopes or cooperate with us in our efforts? Can you not realize that so far as the work of national elevation is concerned, the energy, which these classes might be expected to represent, is simply unavailable to us? . . . I think that there is not much hope for us as a nation unless the help of all classes, including those that are known as low castes, is forthcoming for the work that lies before us. Moreover, is it, I may ask, consistent with our own self-respect that these men should be kept out of our houses and shut out from all social intercourse as long as they remain within the pale of Hinduism, whereas the moment they put on a coat and a hat and a pair of trousers and call themselves Christians, we are prepared to shake hands with them and look upon them as quite respectable? . . .

This work is bound to be slow and can only be achieved by strenuous exertions for giving them education and finding for them honourable employment in life. And, gentlemen, it seems to me that, in the present state of India, no

work can be higher or holier than this. I think if there is one question of social reform more than another that should stir the enthusiasm of our educated young men and inspire them with an unselfish purpose, it is this question of the degraded condition of our low castes. Cannot a few men—five percent, four percent, three, two, even one percent—of the hundreds and hundreds of graduates that the university turns out every year, take it upon themselves to dedicate their lives to this sacred work of the elevation of low castes? . . . I may well address such an appeal to the young members of our community—to those who have not yet decided upon their future course and who entertain the noble aspiration of devoting to a worthy cause the education which they have received. What the country needs most at the present moment is a spirit of self-sacrifice on the part of our educated young men, and they may take it from me that they cannot spend their lives in a better cause than raising the moral and intellectual level of these unhappy low castes and promoting their general well-being.

[From Gokhale, *Speeches*, 898–902.]

THE SERVANTS OF INDIA SOCIETY

The charter of the Servants of India Society embodies Gokhale's cherished aims for the uplift of his country.

For some time past, the conviction has been forcing itself on many earnest and thoughtful minds that a stage has been reached in the political education and national advancement of the Indian people, when, for further progress, the devoted labors of a specially trained agency, applying itself to the task in a true missionary spirit, are required. The work that has so far been done has indeed been of the highest value. The growth, during the last fifty years, of a feeling of common nationality, based upon common tradition, common disabilities, and common hopes and aspirations, has been most striking. The fact that we are Indians first, and Hindoos, Mahomedans, Parsees, or Christians afterwards, is being realized in a steadily increasing measure, and the idea of a united and renovated India, marching onwards to a place among the nations of the world worthy of her great past, is no longer a mere idle dream of a few imaginative minds, but is the definitely accepted creed of those who form the brain of the community—the educated classes of the country. A creditable beginning has already been made in matters of education and of local self-government; and all classes of the people are slowly but steadily coming under the influence of liberal ideas. The claims of public life are every day receiving wider recognition, and attachment to the land of our birth is growing into a strong and deeply cherished passion of the heart. The annual meetings of the National Congress and of provincial and other conferences, the work of political associations, the writings in the columns of the Indian press—all bear witness to the new life that

is coursing in the veins of the people. The results achieved so far are undoubtedly most gratifying, but they only mean that the jungle has been cleared and the foundations laid. The great work of rearing the super-structure has yet to be taken in hand, and the situation demands, on the part of workers, devotion and sacrifices proportionate to the magnitude of the task.

The Servants of India Society has been established to meet in some measure these requirements of the situation. Its members frankly accept the British connection, as ordained, in the inscrutable dispensation of Providence, for India's good. Self-government on the lines of English colonies is their goal. This goal, they recognize, cannot be attained without years of earnest and patient work and sacrifices worthy of the cause. Moreover, the path is beset with great difficulties—there are constant temptations to turn back—bitter disappointments will repeatedly try the faith of those who have put their hand to the work. But the weary toil can have but one end, if only the workers grow not fainthearted on the way. One essential condition of success is that a sufficient number of our countrymen must now come forward to devote themselves to the cause in the spirit in which religious work is undertaken. Public life must be spiritualized. Love of country must so fill the heart that all else shall appear as of little moment by its side. A fervent patriotism which rejoices at every opportunity of sacrifice for the motherland, a dauntless heart which refuses to be turned back from its object by difficulty or danger, a deep faith in the purpose of Providence that nothing can shake—equipped with these, the worker must start on his mission and reverently seek the joy which comes of spending oneself in the service of one's country.

The Servants of India Society will train men, prepared to devote their lives to the cause of the country in a religious spirit, and will seek to promote, by all constitutional means, the national interests of the Indian people. Its members will direct their efforts principally towards: 1) creating among the people, by example and by precept, a deep and passionate love of the motherland, seeking its highest fulfillment in service and sacrifice; 2) organizing the work of political education and agitation and strengthening the public life of the country; 3) promoting relations of cordial goodwill and cooperation among the different communities; 4) assisting educational movements, especially those for the education of women, the education of backward classes and industrial and scientific education; and 5) the elevation of the depressed classes. The headquarters of the Society will be at Poona, where it will maintain a Home for its members, and attached to it, a library for the study of political questions. The following constitution has been adopted for the Society.

1. The Society shall be called "The Servants of India Society."
2. The objects of the Society are to train men to devote themselves to the service of India as national missionaries and to promote . . . the national interests of the Indian people.

[Items 3 to 8 and 10 onward deal with organizational questions.]

9. Every member, at the time of admission, shall take the following seven vows:
 - (i) That the country will always be the first in his thoughts and he will give to her service the best that is in him.
 - (ii) That in serving the country he will seek no personal advantage for himself.
 - (iii) That he will regard all Indians as brothers, and will work for the advancement of all, without distinction of caste or creed.
 - (iv) That he will be content with such provision for himself and his family, if he has any, as the Society may be able to make. He will devote no part of his energies to earning money for himself.
 - (v) That he will lead a pure personal life.
 - (vi) That he will engage in no personal quarrel with any one.
 - (vii) That he will always keep in view the aims of the Society and watch over its interests with the utmost zeal, doing all he can to advance its work. He will never do anything which is inconsistent with the objects of the Society.

[From Gokhale, *Speeches*, 914–917.]

ROMESH CHUNDER DUTT: PIONEER ECONOMIC HISTORIAN

From his own experience as a government official in rural Bengal from 1871 to 1897, Romesh Chunder Dutt (1848–1909) felt deeply the poverty of India's villagers. After taking an early retirement, he wrote two volumes on India's economic history under British rule, denouncing those policies that had led, in his opinion, to the poverty of the vast majority of his countrymen.

Dutt was born in Calcutta, the son of a surveyor in government service, and started school at the age of four. He saw a good deal of Bengal's countryside over the next eight years, since his father was posted from one rural town to another. He remembered that in 1858 "great cheers" and "cries of 'Long live the Queen' in English and Bengali rent the air" when Victoria was proclaimed Queen of India.¹¹ The year after that his mother died, followed two years later by his father; an affectionate uncle raised him until his marriage was arranged at fifteen. At sixteen he entered college. At nineteen, he and a friend left their homes secretly at night, joined young Surendra-nath Banerjea, and all sailed to London to study for the prestigious Indian Civil Service. He came out near the top of the list and passed his bar exams as well; then he returned to India to take up his duties on a low rung of the civil service ladder.

By dint of hard work and good judgment he reached the post of divisional commissioner, the highest level an Indian had attained in the civil service. In 1895–1896 he had charge of the entire area that today is the State of Orissa. At intervals in this busy career he found time to write books about Bengal peasant life and Bengali literature, as well as two social and four historical novels in Bengali. In addition, he applied his literary skill to the task of making both his countrymen and the Western world more

aware of the greatness of ancient India's civilization. First he outraged orthodox Brahmins by rendering the sacred hymns of the *Rig Veda* into Bengali, then he published selections from them in English. He also wrote a three-volume *History of Civilization in Ancient India* (1899–1900) with a patriotic purpose in mind. As he stated in his introduction: “No study has so potent an influence in forming a nation's mind, a nation's character, as a critical and careful study of its past history. And it is by such study alone that an unreasoning and superstitious worship of the past is replaced by a legitimate and manly admiration.”¹² In addition, he selected and translated into English verse narrative passages from the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyana*.

Romesh Dutt's services to his countrymen took new forms after retirement freed him to travel, give public speeches, and concentrate his writing on the relationship between India and Britain and how it might be improved. A series of terrible famines struck several areas of the country in 1896–1897 and 1900–1901, and Dutt's concern about how such catastrophes could be averted in the future was reflected in his presidential address to the Indian National Congress in 1899 and in his books *England and India* (1895), *Famines and Land Assessments in India* (1900), *The Economic History of India Under Early British Rule* (1901), and *India in the Victorian Age: An Economic History of the People* (1904). In each he prescribed measures for making the government of India more sensitive to the needs of the peasantry, and for lessening the tax burdens on the poor.

In his last five years, from 1904 to 1909, he resumed his career as an administrator by entering the service of the Gaekwar of Baroda, an Indian ruler in Gujarat. There he introduced some of the reforms he had implored the British to adopt in British India. From 1906 to 1909 he reasoned with Lord Morley (then secretary of state for India), privately and persuasively, in person and by mail, urging greater Indian participation in the provincial and central governments, which Parliament embodied in the Government of India Act of 1909. Later in that year he died, remembered by those who know his work as *Garib ka Dost* (“Friend of the Poor”).

THE CAUSES OF INDIA'S POVERTY

Romesh Chunder Dutt attributed India's poverty to Britain's failings on four counts: the discouragement of handwoven cloth production; heavy and unpredictable taxes on agriculture; the outflow of money from India to pay its foreign debt and some of its administrative costs; and the absence of Indian representatives at the highest levels of government. Although his arguments on the first and third counts were countered to some extent in *The Economic Transition in India* (1911) by Theodore Morison, who noted that the “industrial transformation” of Canada, Argentina, Japan, and so forth, was also accompanied by the decline of “archaic” modes of production and considerable foreign indebtedness, Dutt's conclusion that India became impoverished under British rule remained a theme with all subsequent nationalist leaders.

Excellent works on the military and political transactions of the British in India have been written by eminent historians. No history of the people of India, of

their trades, industries, and agriculture, and of their economic condition under British administration, has yet been compiled.

Recent famines in India have attracted attention to this very important subject, and there is a general and widespread desire to understand the condition of the Indian people—the sources of their wealth and the causes of their poverty. . . .

Englishmen can look back on their work in India, if not with unalloyed satisfaction, at least with some legitimate pride. They have conferred on the people of India what is the greatest human blessing—Peace. They have introduced Western Education, bringing an ancient and civilised nation in touch with modern thought, modern sciences, modern institutions and life. They have built up an Administration which, though it requires reform with the progress of the times, is yet strong and efficacious. They have framed wise laws, and have established Courts of Justice, the purity of which is as absolute as in any country on the face of the earth. These are results which no honest critic of British work in India regards without high admiration.

On the other hand, no open-minded Englishman contemplates the material condition of the people of India under British rule with equal satisfaction. The poverty of the Indian population at the present day is unparalleled in any civilised country; the famines which have desolated India within the last quarter of the nineteenth century are unexampled in their extent and intensity in the history of ancient or modern times. By a moderate calculation, the famines of 1877 and 1878, of 1889 and 1892, of 1897 and 1900, have carried off fifteen millions of people. The population of a fair-sized European country has been swept away from India within twenty-five years. A population equal to half of that of England has perished in India within a period which men and women, still in middle age, can remember.

What are the causes of this intense poverty and these repeated famines in India? Superficial explanations have been offered . . . and have been rejected. . . . It was said that the population increased rapidly in India and that such increase must necessarily lead to famines; it is found on inquiry that the population has never increased in India at the rate of England, and that during the last ten years it has altogether ceased to increase. It was said that the Indian cultivators were careless and improvident . . . but it is known to men who have lived all their lives among these cultivators, that there is not a more abstemious, a more thrifty, a more frugal race of peasantry on earth. It was said that the Indian money-lender was the bane of India, and by his fraud and extortion kept the tillers of the soil in a chronic state of indebtedness; but the inquiries of the latest Famine Commission have revealed that the cultivators of India are forced under the thralldom of money-lenders by the rigidity of the Government revenue demand. It was said that in a country where the people depended almost entirely on their crops, they must starve when the crops failed in years of drought; but the crops in India, as a whole, have never failed, there has never been a

single year when the food supply of the country was insufficient for the people, and there must be something wrong, when failure in a single province brings on a famine, and the people are unable to buy their supplies from neighbouring provinces rich in harvests. . . .

It is, unfortunately, a fact which no well-informed Indian official will ignore, that, in many ways, the sources of national wealth in India have been narrowed under British rule. India in the eighteenth century was a great manufacturing as well as a great agricultural country, and the products of the Indian loom supplied the markets of Asia and of Europe. It is, unfortunately, true that the East Indian Company and the British Parliament, following the selfish commercial policy of a hundred years ago, discouraged Indian manufacturers in the early years of British rule in order to encourage the rising manufactures of England. Their fixed policy, pursued during the last decades of the eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth, was to make India subservient to the industries of Great Britain, and to make the Indian people grow raw produce only, in order to supply material for the looms and manufactories of Great Britain. This policy was pursued with unwavering resolution and with fatal success; orders were sent out, to force Indian artisans to work in the Company's factories; commercial residents were legally vested with extensive powers over villages and communities of Indian weavers; prohibitive tariffs excluded Indian silk and cotton goods from England; English goods were admitted into India free of duty or on payment of a nominal duty.

The British manufacturer, in the words of the historian H. H. Wilson, "employed the arm of political injustice to keep down and ultimately strangle a competitor with whom he could not have contended on equal terms"; millions of Indian artisans lost their earnings; the population of India lost one great source of their wealth. It is a painful episode in the history of British rule in India; but it is a story which has to be told to explain the economic condition of the Indian people, and their present helpless dependence on agriculture. The invention of the power-loom in Europe completed the decline of the Indian industries; and when in recent years the power-loom was set up in India, England once more acted towards India with unfair jealousy. An excise duty has been imposed on the production of cotton fabrics in India which disables the Indian manufacturer from competing with the manufacturer of Japan and China, and which stifles the new steam-mills of India.

Agriculture is now virtually the only remaining source of national wealth in India, and four-fifths of the Indian people depend on agriculture. But the Land Tax levied by the British Government is not only excessive but, what is worse, it is fluctuating and uncertain in many provinces. . . .

It will appear from the facts stated above that the Land Tax in India is not only heavy and uncertain, but that the very principle on which it is raised is different from the principle of taxation in all well-administered countries. In such countries the State promotes the accumulation of wealth, helps the people to

put money into their pockets, likes to see them prosperous and rich, and then demands a small share of their earnings for the expenses of the State. In India the State virtually interferes with the accumulation of wealth from the soil, intercepts the incomes and gains of the tillers, and generally adds to its land revenue demand at each recurring settlement, leaving the cultivators permanently poor. In England, in Germany, in the United States, in France and other countries, the State widens the income of the people, extends their markets, opens out new sources of wealth, identifies itself with the nation, grows richer with the nation. In India, the State has fostered no new industries and revived no old industries for the people; on the other hand, it intervenes at each recurring land settlement to take what it considers its share out of the produce of the soil. Each new [land tax] settlement in Bombay and in Madras is regarded by the people as a wrangle between them and the State as to how much the former will keep and how much the latter will take. It is a wrangle decided without any clear limits fixed by the law—a wrangle in which the opinion of the revenue officials is final, and there is no appeal to judges or Land Courts. The revenue increases and the people remain destitute.

Taxation raised by a king, says the Indian poet, is like the moisture of the earth sucked up by the sun, to be returned to the earth as fertilising rain; but the moisture raised from the Indian soil now descends as fertilising rain largely on other lands, not on India. Every nation reasonably expects that the proceeds of taxes raised in the country should be mainly spent in the country. Under the worst governments that India had in former times, this was the case. The vast sums which Afghan and Moghal Emperors spent on their armies went to support great and princely houses, as well as hundreds of thousands of soldiers and their families. The gorgeous palaces and monuments they built, as well as the luxuries and displays in which they indulged, fed and encouraged the manufacturers and artisans of India. Nobles and Commanders of the army, Subadars, Dewans, and Kazis,¹³ and a host of inferior officers in every province and every district, followed the example of the Court; and mosques and temples, roads, canals and reservoirs, attested to their wide liberality, or even to their vanity. Under wise rulers as under foolish kings, the proceeds of taxation flowed back to the people and fructified their trade and industries. . . .

For one who has himself spent the best and happiest years of his life in the work of Indian administration, it is an ungracious and a painful task to dwell on the weak side of that administration, the financial and economic policy of the Indian government. . . . The deep-seated cause of the poverty of the Indian people has to be explained. Place any other country under the same condition, with crippled industries, with agriculture subject to a heavy and uncertain Land Tax, and with financial arrangements requiring one-half of its revenues to be annually remitted out of the country, and the most prosperous nation on earth will soon know the horrors of famine. A nation prospers if the sources of its wealth are widened, and if the proceeds of taxation are spent among the

people, and for the people. A nation is impoverished if the sources of its wealth are narrowed, and the proceeds of taxation are largely remitted out of the country. These are plain, self-evident economic laws, which operate in India, as in every other country, and the Indian statesman and administrator must feel that the poverty of India cannot be removed until Indian industries are revived, until a fixed and intelligible limit is placed on the Indian Land Tax, and until the Indian revenues are more largely spent in India. . . .

Nor are Indian administrators strong in the support of the Indian people. The Indian Government means the Viceroy and the Members of the Executive Council, viz., the Commander-in-Chief, the Military Member, the Public Works Member, the Finance Member, and the Legal Member. The people are not represented in this Council; their agriculture, their landed interests, their trades and industries, are not represented; there is not, and never has been, a single Indian member in the Council. All the Members of the Council are heads of spending departments, as was lately explained by Sir Auckland Colvin and Sir David Barbour before the Royal Commission on Indian expenditure. The Members are high English officials, undoubtedly interested in the welfare of the people, but driven by the duties of their office to seek for more money for the working of their departments; there are no Indian Members to represent the interests of the people. The forces are all arrayed on the side of expenditure . . . [and] none on the side of retrenchment. . . .

“The government of a people by itself,” said John Stuart Mill, “has a meaning and a reality; but such a thing as government of one people by another does not, and cannot exist. One people may keep another for its own use, a place to make money in, a human cattle-farm to be worked for the profits of its own inhabitants.”

There is more truth in this strongly worded statement than appears at first sight. History does not record a single instance of one people ruling another in the interests of the subject nation. Mankind has not yet discovered any method for safeguarding the interests of a subject nation without conceding to that nation some voice in controlling the administration of their own concerns. . . .

The wisest administrators in the past, like Munro, Elphinstone, and Bentinck, . . . sought to promote the welfare of the people by accepting the co-operation of the people, as far as was possible, in their day. What is needed to-day is a continuance and development of the same policy, not a policy of exclusiveness and distrust. What is needed to-day is that British rulers, who know less of India to-day than their predecessors did fifty years ago, should descend from their dizzy isolation, and should stand amidst the people, work with the people, make the people their comrades and collaborators, and hold the people responsible for good administration. . . .

The dawn of a new century finds India deeper in distress and discontent than any preceding period of history. A famine, wider in the extent of country affected than any previous famine, has desolated the country. In parts of India,

not affected by this famine, large classes of people attest to semi-starvation by their poor physique; numbers of them suffer from a daily insufficiency of food; and the poorer classes are trained by life-long hunger to live on less food than is needed for proper nourishment. In the presence of facts like these, party controversy is silenced; and every Englishman and every Indian, experienced in administration and faithful to the British Empire, feel it their duty to suggest methods for the removal of the gravest danger which has ever threatened the Empire of India.

[From Dutt, *The Economic History of India Under Early British Rule* (London: Morrison and Gibb, 1901), v–ix, xi–xvi, xxi–xxii.]

SIR SAYYID AHMAD KHAN: AN ANTI-CONGRESS SPEECH

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (see chapter 2) opposed the Congress from its inception. The following speech was given two years after its founding in 1885, and lays out his position. As is evident from Sir Sayyid's sarcastic language, British officials in India, and some educated Muslims as well, shared a stereotyped view of educated Hindu Bengalis as timid, ineffectual, and cowardly. The Rajputs, by contrast, were praised for being warlike, a quality that Sir Sayyid sought to present as shared by Muslims.

THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AS A DANGER AND A FOLLY

In this speech Sir Sayyid tried to walk a careful line, persuading his Muslim audience that as former rulers they were gallant and militarily dangerous, such that in the wake of 1857 the British rulers were right to distrust them; but at the same time they were loyal and trustworthy British subjects, who did not seek anything as foolish and unworkable as democratic self-government. Still, the final cure for all problems was, as always, education.

Gentlemen,—I am not given to speaking on politics, and I do not recollect having ever previously given a political lecture. My attention has always been directed towards the education of my brother Mohammedans, for from education I anticipate much benefit for my people, for Hindustan, and for the Government. But at the present time circumstances have arisen which make it necessary for me, I think, to tell my brother Mussalmans clearly what my opinions are. The object [here] . . . is to explain the attitude which the Mohammedan community ought to adopt with regard to the political movements of the time. . . . There has grown up in India a political agitation, and it is necessary to determine what action should be taken by the Mohammedan community with

regard to it. . . . If it be useful, we must follow it, but if dangerous for the country or our nation, we must hold aloof.

Before I enter on this subject, let me briefly describe the methods of rule adopted by our Government, which has now been here for nearly a hundred years. Its method is this: to keep in its own hands all questions of foreign policy and all matters affecting its army. . . . Our interests will not suffer from these matters being left in the hands of Government. But we are concerned with matters affecting internal policy; and we have to observe what method Government has adopted for dealing with them. Government has made a Council for making laws affecting the lives, property, and comfort of the people. For this Council, she selects from all Provinces those officials who are best acquainted with the administration and the condition of the people, and also some Rais-es [nobles], who, on account of their high social position, are worthy of a seat in that assembly.

Some people may ask—Why should they be chosen on account of social position instead of ability? On this, gentlemen, I will say a few words. It is a great misfortune—and I ask your pardon for saying it—that the landed gentry of India have not the trained ability which makes them worthy of occupying those seats. But you must not neglect those circumstances which compel Government to adopt this policy. It is very necessary that for the Viceroy's Council the members should be of high social position. . . .

The method of procedure in the Council is this. If any member introduces a subject of importance and difficulty, a commission is appointed which collects evidence and digests it. The matter is discussed in every newspaper, and memorials are invited from Associations. The Council then discusses the matter, every member speaking his views with great vigour and earnestness, more even than was displayed in the discussion on the third resolution of the Moham-medan Educational Congress, advocating what he thinks necessary for the welfare of the country. . . . I have had the honour of being in this Council. I do not recollect any matter of importance concerning which ten or twenty memorials were not sent in. A Select Committee was then appointed, which read through these memorials and discussed them at length, many of which on consideration turned out to be thorough nonsense. Extracts from Urdu papers were also considered. Although not in my presence, yet often amendments suggested by these memorials have been adopted. This is the method of our Government. After this the law is passed and sent to the Secretary of State, who is assisted by the Council of State, which consists of men of the highest ability, who have lived for a long time in India and have often held all offices, from that of Assistant Collector to Lieutenant-Governor. If they think it expedient it is passed, otherwise a short note of four lines cancels it. Often people make objections to the laws so passed, and in some cases they are perhaps right; but in the majority of cases, as far as my experience goes, those very people who sit in their

houses and make objections would, if they had been on Viceroy's Council, have supported them. . . . No one can say that Government acts independently of the wishes and opinions of its subjects. Often it adopts some of the views expressed in newspapers and memorials. . . .

There is now another great duty of Government. That is, that in whatever country Government establishes its dominion, that dominion should be made strong, firm, and secure. I believe that if any of my friends were made Viceroy, he would be as loyal to Her Majesty the Queen-Empress of India as is our present Viceroy, Lord Dufferin. . . . It is a first principle of Empire that it is the supreme duty of everyone, whether Hindustani or Englishman, in whose power it rests, to do what he can to strengthen the Government of Her Majesty the Queen. The second duty of Government is to preserve peace, to give personal freedom, to protect life and property; to punish criminals and to decide civil disputes. . . . Every one will admit that Government completely fulfils its duty in this respect.

Many people think that the laws have become too numerous and consequently that lawsuits have become more complicated, and thus, lead to disputes between the zamindar and the kashtkar [laborer]. But this is the opinion of the critics who sit in their houses, who if they sat on the Viceroy's Council would change their views. The multiplicity of laws depends upon the condition of the country and of its people. New companies and new industries are springing into existence. New and unforeseen legal rights have arisen which are not provided for in the Mohammedan law. Hence, when the country is changing at such a rate, it is absolutely necessary that new laws should be brought forward to deal with the new circumstances. . . .

I come now to the main subject on which I wish to address you. That is the National Congress and the demands which that body makes of Government. . . . When the Government of India passed out of the hands of the East India Company into those of the Queen, a law was passed, saying that all subjects of Her Majesty, whether white or black, European or Indian, should be equally eligible for appointments. This was confirmed by the Queen's Proclamation. We have to see whether, in the rules made for admission to civil appointments, any exception has been made to this or not; whether we have been excluded from any appointments for which we are fitted. Nobody can point out a case in which for any appointment a distinction of race has been made. It is true that for the Covenanted Civil Service a special set of rules has been made, namely, that candidates have to pass a competitive examination in England. . . .

I do not think it necessary for me on this occasion to discuss the question why the competitive examination is held in England, and what would be the evils arising from its transference to India. But I am going to speak of the evils likely to follow the introduction into India of the competitive principle. I do not wish to speak in the interest of my own co-religionists, but to express faithfully whether I think the country is prepared for competitive examination or not.

What is the result of competitive examination in England? You know that men of all social positions, sons of Dukes or Earls, of darzies [tailors] and people of low rank, are equally allowed to pass this examination. Men of both high and low family come to India in the Civil Service. And it is the universal belief that it is not expedient for Government to bring the men of low rank; and that the men of good social position treat Indian gentlemen with becoming politeness, maintain the prestige of the British race, and impress on the hearts of the people a sense of British justice; and are useful both to Government and to the country. But those who come from England, come from a country so far removed from our eyes that we do not know whether they are the sons of Lords or Dukes or of darzies, and therefore, if those who govern us are of humble rank, we cannot perceive the fact. But as regards Indians, the case is different. Men of good family would never like to trust their lives and property to people of low rank with whose humble origin they are well acquainted (*Cheers from the audience*).

Leave this a moment, and consider what are the conditions which make introduction into a country of competitive examination expedient, and then see whether our own country is ready for it or not. This is no difficult question of political economy; everyone can understand that the first condition for the introduction of competitive examination into a country is that all people in that country, from the highest to the lowest, should belong to one nation. In such a country no particular difficulties are likely to arise. The second case is that of a country in which there are two nationalities which have become so united as to be practically one nation. England and Scotland are a case in point. . . . But this is not the case with our country, which is peopled with different nations. Consider the Hindus alone. The Hindus of our Province, the Bengalis of the East, and the Mahrattas of the Deccan, do not form one nation. If, in your opinion, the peoples of India do form one nation, then no doubt competitive examination may be introduced; but if this be not so, then competitive examination is not suited to the country. The third case is that of a country in which there are different nationalities which are on an equal footing as regards the competition, whether they take advantage of it or not. Now, I ask you, have Mohammedans attained to such a position as regards higher English education, which is necessary for higher appointments, as to put them on a level with Hindus or not? Most certainly not. Now, I take Mohammedans and the Hindus of our Province together, and ask whether they are able to compete with the Bengalis or not? Most certainly not. When this is the case, how can competitive examination be introduced into our country (*Cheers from the audience*).

Think for a moment what would be the result if all appointments were given by competitive examination. Over all races, not only over Mohammedans but over Rajas of high position and the brave Rajputs who have not forgotten the swords of their ancestors, would be placed as ruler a Bengali who at sight of a table knife would crawl under his chair (*Uproarious cheers and laughter from the audience*). There would remain no part of the country in which we should

see at the tables of justice and authority any face except those of Bengalis. I am delighted to see the Bengalis making progress, but the question is—What would be the result on the administration of the country? Do you think that the Rajput and the fiery Pathan, who are not afraid of being hanged or of encountering the swords of the police or the bayonets of the army, could remain in peace under the Bengalis? (*Cheers from the audience*). This would be the outcome of the proposal, if accepted. Therefore if any of you—men of good position, Rais-es, men of the middle classes, men of noble family to whom God has given sentiments of honour—if you accept that the country should groan under the yoke of Bengali rule and its people lick the Bengali shoes, then, in the name of God jump into the train, sit down, and be off to Madras, be off to Madras [for the Congress meeting]! (*Loud cheers and laughter from the audience*).

The second demand of the National Congress is that the people should elect a section of the Viceroy's council. They want to copy the English House of Lords and the House of Commons. The elected members are to be like members of the House of Commons; the appointed members like the House of Lords. Now, let us suppose the Viceroy's Council is made in this manner. And let us suppose first of all that we have universal suffrage, as in America, and that everybody, chamars [Untouchables] and all, have votes. And first suppose that all the Mohammedan electors vote for a Mohammedan member and all Hindu electors for a Hindu member, and now count how many votes the Mohammedan members have and how many the Hindu. It is certain the Hindu members will have four times as many because their population is four times as numerous. Therefore we can prove by mathematics that there will be four votes for the Hindu to every one vote for the Mohammedan. And now how can the Mohammedan guard his interests?

In the second place, suppose that the electorate be limited. Some method of qualification must be made; for example, that people with a certain income shall be electors. Now, I ask you, O Mohammedans! Weep at your condition! Have you such wealth that you can compete with the Hindus? Most certainly not. Suppose, for example, that an income of Rs. 5,000 a year be fixed on, how many Mohammedans will there be? Which party will have the larger number of votes? I put aside the case that by a rare stroke of luck a blessing comes through the roof, and some Mohammedan is elected. In the normal case no single Mohammedan will secure a seat in the Viceroy's Council. The whole Council will consist of Babu So-and-so Chuckerburty [a Bengali name] (*Laughter from the audience*). Again, what will be the result for the Hindus of our Province, though their condition be better than that of the Mohammedans? What will be the result for those Rajputs the swords of whose ancestors are still wet with blood? And what will be the result for the peace of the country?

Now, we will suppose a third kind of election. Suppose a rule is to be made that a suitable number of Mohammedans and a suitable number of Hindus are

to be chosen. I am aghast when I think on what grounds this number is likely to be determined. Of necessity proportion to total population will be taken. So there will be one number for us to every four for the Hindus. No other condition can be laid down. Then they will have four votes and we shall have one. Now, I will make a fourth supposition. Leaving aside the question as to the suitability of members with regard to population, let us suppose that a rule is laid down that half the members are to be Mohammedan and half Hindus, and that the Mohammedans and Hindus are each to elect their own men. Now, I ask you to pardon me for saying something which I say with a sore heart. In the whole nation there is no person who is equal to the Hindus in fitness for the work. . . . Tell me who there is of our nation in the Punjab, Oudh, and North-Western Provinces, who will leave his business, incur these expenses, and attend the Viceroy's Council for the sake of his countrymen. When this is the condition of your nation, is it expedient for you to take part in this business on the absurd supposition that the demands of the Congress would, if granted, be beneficial for the country? Spurn such foolish notions. It is certainly not expedient to adopt this cry—*Chalo* [Let's go to] Madras! *Chalo* Madras!—without thinking of the consequences.

Besides this there is another important consideration, which is this. Suppose that a man of our own nationality were made Viceroy of India, that is, the deputy of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen-Empress. Could such a person grant demands like these, keeping in view the duty of preserving the Empire on a firm and secure basis? Never! Then how absurd to suppose that the British Government can grant these requests? The result of these unrealizable and impossible proposals can be only this, that for a piece of sheer nonsense the hearts of everybody will be discontented with Government. . . .

Everybody knows well that the agitation of the Bengalis is not the agitation of the whole of India. But suppose it were the agitation of the whole of India, and that every nation had taken part in it, do you suppose the Government is so weak that it would not suppress it, but must needs be itself overwhelmed? Have you not seen what took place in the Mutiny? It was a time of great difficulty. The army had revolted; some *badmashes* [bad characters] had joined it; and Government wrongly believed that the people at large were taking part in the rebellion. I am the man who attacked this wrong notion, and while the Government was hanging its officials, I printed a pamphlet, and told Government that it was entirely false to suppose that the people at large were rebellious. But in spite of all these difficulties, what harm could this rebellion do to the Government? Before the English troops had landed, she had regained her authority from shore to shore. Hence, what benefit is expected from all this for the country, and what revolution in the Government can we produce? The only results can be to produce a useless uproar, to raise suspicions in Government, and to bring back again that time which we experienced thirty or thirty-one years

ago. . . . Will you kindly point out to me ten men among our agitators who will consent to stand face to face with the bayonets? When this is the case, then what sort of an uproar is this, and is it of such a nature that we ought to join it?

We ought to consider carefully our own circumstances and the circumstances of Government. If Government entertains unfavourable sentiments towards our community, then I say with the utmost force that these sentiments are entirely wrong. At the same time if we are just, we must admit that such sentiments would be by no means unnatural. . . . Think for a moment who you are. What is this nation of ours? We are those who ruled India for six or seven hundred years (*Cheers from the audience*). From our hands the country was taken by Government into its own. Is it not natural then for Government to entertain such thoughts? Is Government so foolish as to suppose that in seventy years we have forgotten all our grandeur and our empire? Although, should Government entertain such notions, she is certainly wrong, yet we must remember she has ample excuse. We do not live on fish; nor are we afraid of using a knife and fork lest we should cut our fingers (*Cheers from the audience*). Our nation is of the blood of those who made not only Arabia, but Asia and Europe to tremble. It is our nation which conquered with its sword the whole of India, although its peoples were all of one religion (*Cheers from the audience*). I say again that if Government entertains suspicions of us it is wrong. But do her the justice and admit that there is a reasonable ground for such suspicions. . . . If Government be wise and Lord Dufferin be a capable Viceroy; then he will realise that a Mohammedan agitation is not the same as a Bengali agitation, and he will be bound to apply an adequate remedy.

Our course of action should be such as to convince Government of the wrongness of her suspicions regarding us, if she entertains any. We should cultivate mutual affection. What we want we should ask for as friends. And if any ill-will exists, it should be cleansed away; I am glad that some Pathans of the N.W.P. and Oudh are here to-day, and I hope some Hindu Rajputs are also present. My friend Yusuf Shah of the Punjab sits here, and he knows well the mood of mind of the people of the Punjab, of the Sikhs and Mussalmans. . . . You should conduct yourself in a straightforward and calm manner. . . .

I come now to some other proposals of the Congress. We have now a very charming suggestion. These people wish to have the Budget of India submitted to them for sanction. Leave aside political expenses; but ask our opinion about the expenses of the army. Why on earth has Government made so big an army? . . . How ridiculous then for those who have never seen a battlefield, or even the mouth of a cannon, to want to prepare the Budget for the army!

A still more charming proposal is the following: When some people wrote articles in newspapers, showing that it was impossible to establish representative government in India, and bringing forward cogent reasons, then they came down a little from their high flight and said: "Let us sit in the Council, let us

chatter; but take votes or not, as you please"; can you tell me the meaning of this, or the use of this folly?

Another very laughable idea is this. Stress is laid on these suggestions: that the Arms Act be repealed, that Indian Volunteers be enlisted, and that army schools be established in India. But do you know what nation is proposing them? If such proposals had come from Mohammedans or from Rajput brothers, whose ancestors always wore the sword, which although it is taken from their belts, yet still remains in their hearts, if they had made such proposals there would have been some sense in it. But what nation makes these demands? I agree with them in this and consider that Government has committed two very great mistakes. One is not to trust the Hindustanis and to allow them to become volunteers. A second error of Government of the greatest magnitude is this, that it does not give appointments in the army to those brave people whose ancestors did not use the pen to write with; no, but a different kind of pen—(*Cheers from the audience*)—nor did they use black ink, but the ink they dipped their pens in was red, red ink which flows from the bodies of men (*Cheers from the audience*). O brothers! I have fought the Government in the harshest language about these points. The time is, however, coming when my brothers, Pathans, Syeds, Hashmi and Koreishi, whose blood smells of the blood of Abraham, will appear in glittering uniform as Colonels and Majors in the army. But we must wait for that time. Government will most certainly attend to it; provided you do not give rise to suspicions of disloyalty. . . .

I will suppose for a moment that you have conquered a part of Europe and have become its rulers. I ask whether you would equally trust the men of that country. This was a mere supposition. I now come to a real example. When you conquered India, what did you yourself do? For how many centuries was there no Hindu in the army list? But when the time of the Mughal family came and mutual trust was established, the Hindus were given very high appointments. Think how many years old is the British rule. How long ago was the Mutiny? And tell me how many years ago Government suffered such grievous troubles, though they arose from the ignorant and not from the gentlemen? Also call to mind that in the Madras Presidency, Government has given permission to the people to enlist as volunteers. I say, too, that this concession was premature, but it is a proof that when trust is established, Government will have no objection to make you also volunteers. And when we shall be qualified, we shall acquire those positions with which our forefathers were honoured. . . .

In the time of Lord Ripon I happened to be a member of the Council. Lord Ripon had a very good heart and kind disposition and every qualification for a Governor. But, unfortunately, his hand was weak. His ideas were radical. At that time the Local Board and Municipality Bills were brought forward, and the intention of them was that everybody should be appointed by election. Gentlemen, I am not a Conservative, I am a great Liberal. But to forget the prosperity

of one's nation is not a sign of wisdom. The only person who was opposed to the system of election was myself. If I am not bragging too much, I may, I think, say that it was on account of my speech that Lord Ripon changed his opinion and made one-third of the members appointed and two-thirds elected. Now just consider the result of election. In no town are Hindus and Mohammedans equal. Can the Mohammedans suppress the Hindus and become the masters of our "Self-Government"? In Calcutta . . . there were eighteen elected members, not one of whom was a Mohammedan; all were Hindus. Now, he wanted Government to appoint some Mohammedans. . . . This is the state of things in all cities. In Aligarh also, were there not a special rule, it would be impossible for any Mohammedan, except my friend Maulvi Mohammed Yusuf, to be elected; and at last he, too, would have to rely on being appointed by Government. Then how can we walk along a road for which neither we nor the country is prepared?

I am now tired and have no further strength left. I can say no more. But, in conclusion, I have one thing to say; lest my friends should say that I have not told them . . . by what thing we may attain prosperity. My age is above seventy. Although I cannot live to see my nation attain to such a position as my heart longs for for it, yet my friends who are present in this meeting will certainly see the nation attain such honour, prosperity and high rank, if they attend to my advice. But, my friends, do not liken me to that dyer who, only possessing mango-coloured dye, said mango-coloured dye was the only one he liked. I assure you that the only thing which can raise you to a high rank is high education. Until our nation can give birth to a highly-educated people it will remain degraded; it will be below others, and will not attain such honour as I desire for it. . . . It was my duty to tell those things which, in my opinion, are necessary for the welfare of my nation . . . to cleanse my hands before God the Omnipotent, the Merciful, and the Forgiver of sins.

[From Sayyid Ahmad Khan, *The Present State of Indian Politics: Speeches and Letters* (Allahabad, 1888), in Bimal Prasad, *Pathway to India's Partition*, vol. 1: *The Foundations of Muslim Nationalism* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1999), appendix 1, 261–271.
Some paragraph breaks added by Frances Pritchett.]

BADRUDDIN TYABJI AND RAHMATULLAH SAYANI: WHY MUSLIMS SHOULD JOIN THE CONGRESS

Through its long history the Indian National Congress always had an active Muslim minority membership. The Congress insisted that it was an all-Indian and all-community organization representing "India." Without minority members playing a vocal part, this would have been a harder claim to make, and it was disputed in any case.

During its first twelve years of meeting, the Congress had two Muslims as presidents of its annual sessions, Badruddin Tyabji (1844–1906) in 1887 and Rahmatullah

M. Sayani (1847–1902) in 1896. Both were distinguished professional men, and both addressed, *inter alia*, the issue of Muslim participation, answering the questions raised by Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan.

Tyabji's father visited Great Britain in 1853 and had his children educated there. Then the younger Tyabji was called to the bar in 1867 (Middle Temple) and became the first Indian barrister in Bombay. In 1895 he accepted a judgeship and acted as chief justice in 1902. He granted bail to Tilak, when others had refused it, and would not accept denigrations of the Congress in his court. In 1871 he joined the agitation to make the Bombay Municipal Corporation an elective council, and was subsequently a member both of it and of the Bombay Legislative Council. He and an older brother were principally responsible for establishing the Anjuman-e Islam ("Islamic Association") in Bombay (1876), but he campaigned against purdah and sent his daughters abroad for education. Although he lived in grand style at Somerset House, he also worked diligently for the educational advancement of poorer Muslims. An important organizer of the early Congress, he was prevented by ill health from attending the first two sessions; but he served as president of the third session in Madras.

Sayani came from a Khoja Muslim family in Cutch and graduated from Elphinstone College in 1866; he gained a law degree, and became a solicitor in 1872. From the mid-1870s he was an active member of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, becoming president of the Corporation (1888) and sheriff of Bombay.¹⁴ He also served in the Bombay Legislative Council and the Imperial Legislative Council.

A keen critic of the government, he opposed the government's efforts to amend the Indian Penal Code to enable it to deal more harshly with "seditious" writings, and pointed to injustices in taxation rates between British India and Great Britain. Like Naoroji he presented evidence for the economic "drain" in his legislative and Congress speeches.

THE CONGRESS PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS BY TYABJI

Tyabji, aligned with Moderate, and later Liberal, opinion in political India, professed to be "loyal to the backbone" to the Raj. He also showed condescension toward the ignorant among his countrymen, and pride in being among the educated and potentially powerful in Indian society who might one day inherit the earth. Nevertheless, in his presidential speech he argued for full Muslim participation in the Congress.

Gentlemen, all the friends and well-wishers of India, and all those who take an interest in watching over the progress and prosperity of our people, have every reason to rejoice at the increasing success of each succeeding Congress. At the first Congress in Bombay, in 1885, we had less than 100 representatives from the different parts of India; in the second Congress, at Calcutta, in 1886, we had as many as 440 representatives; while at this Congress, I believe, we have over 600 delegates representing all the different parts and all the different communities

of this great Empire. I think, then, Gentlemen, that we are fairly entitled to say that this is a truly representative national gathering. . . .

CONGRESS AND MUSALMANS

Gentlemen, it has been urged in derogation of our character, as a representative national gathering, that one great and important community—the Musalman community—has kept aloof from the proceedings of the two last Congress. Now, Gentlemen, in the first place, this is only partially true. . . . Gentlemen, I must honestly confess to you that one great motive, which has induced me in the present state of my health to undertake the grave responsibilities of presiding over your deliberations, has been an earnest desire on my part to prove, as far as in my power lies, that I, at least not merely in my individual capacity but as representing the Anjuman-i-Islam of Bombay, do not consider that there is anything whatever in the position or the relations of the different communities of India—be they Hindus, Musalmans, Parsis, or Christians—which should induce the leaders of any one community to stand aloof from the others in their efforts to obtain those great general reforms . . . for the common benefit of us all and which, I feel assured, have only to be earnestly and unanimously pressed upon Government to be granted to us.

Gentlemen, it is undoubtedly true that each one of our great Indian communities has its own peculiar social, moral, educational and even political difficulties to surmount—but so far as general political questions affecting the whole of India—such as those which alone are discussed by this Congress—are concerned, I, for one, am utterly at a loss to understand why Musalmans should not work shoulder to shoulder with their fellow-countrymen, of other races and creeds, for the common benefit of all. . . .

A CONGRESS OF EDUCATED NATIVES

Gentlemen, it has been urged as a slur upon our loyalty that this Congress is composed of what are called the educated natives of India. Now, if by this it is intended to be conveyed that we are merely a crowd of people with nothing but our education to commend us, if it is intended to be conveyed that the gentry, the nobility, and the aristocracy of the land have kept aloof from us, I can only meet that assertion by the most direct and the most absolute denial. To any person who made that assertion, I should feel inclined to say: “Come with me into this Hall and look around you, and tell me where you could wish to see a better representation of the aristocracy, not only of birth and of wealth, but of intellect, education, and position, than you see gathered within the walls of this Hall.” . . .

Gentlemen, I, for one, am proud to be called not only educated but a “native” of this country. And, Gentlemen, I should like to know where among all the millions of Her Majesty’s subjects in India are to be found more truly loyal, nay, more devoted friends of the British Empire than among these educated natives. . . . I should like to know who is in a better position to appreciate these blessings—the ignorant peasants or the educated natives? Who, for instance, will better appreciate the advantages of good roads, railways, telegraphs and post offices, schools, colleges and universities, hospitals, good laws and impartial courts of justice?—the educated natives or the ignorant peasants of this country? Gentlemen, if there ever were to arise—which God forbid—any great struggle between Russia and Great Britain for supremacy in this country—who is more likely to judge better of the two Empires? . . . It is we who know and are best able to appreciate, for instance, the blessings of the right of public meeting, the liberty of action and of speech, and high education which we enjoy under Great Britain. . . .

ARE THE EDUCATED NATIVES DISLOYAL?

No, Gentlemen, let our opponents say what they please, we the educated natives, by the mere force of our education, must be the best appreciators of the blessings of a civilized and enlightened Government and, therefore, in our own interests, the best and staunchest supporters of the British Government in India. But, Gentlemen, do those who thus charge us with disloyalty stop for a moment to consider the full meaning and effect of their argument,—do they realize the full importance and significance of the assertion they make? Do they understand that, in charging us with disloyalty, they are in reality condemning and denouncing the very Government which it is their intention to support. Gentlemen, when they say that the educated natives of India are disloyal, what does it mean? It means this: that in the opinion of the educated natives—that is to say, of all the men of light and leading, all those who have received a sound, liberal and enlightened education, all those who are acquainted with the history of their own country and with the nature of the present and past Governments, that in the opinion of all these—the English Government is so bad that it has deserved to forfeit the confidence and the loyalty of the thinking part of the population. Now, Gentlemen, is it conceivable that a more frightful and unjust condemnation of the British Government can be pronounced than is implied in this charge of disloyalty against the educated natives of India? . . .

Happily, however, Gentlemen, this allegation is as absurd as it is unfounded. . . . But though, Gentlemen, I maintain that the educated natives, as a class, are loyal to the backbone, I must yet admit that some of our countrymen are not always guarded, not always cautious, in the language they employ. I must admit that some of them do sometimes afford openings for hostile criticisms, and I

must say that I have myself observed in some of the Indian newspapers, and in the speeches of public speakers, sentiments and expressions which are calculated to lead one to the conclusion that they have not fully realised the distinction between licence and liberty; that they have not wholly grasped the lesson that freedom has its responsibilities no less than its privileges. And, therefore, Gentlemen, I trust that not only during the debates of this Congress, but on all occasions, we shall ever bear in mind and ever impress upon our countrymen that, if we are to enjoy the right of public discussion, the liberty of speech and liberty of the Press, we must so conduct ourselves as to demonstrate by our conduct, by our moderation, by the justness of our criticisms, that we fully deserve these—the greatest blessings which an enlightened Government can confer upon its subjects.

EUROPEANS AND INDIAN ASPIRATIONS

Gentlemen, it has been sometimes urged that Europeans in this country do not fully sympathise with the just aspirations of the natives of India. In the first place, this is not universally true, because I have the good fortune to know many Europeans than whom truer or more devoted friends of India do not breathe on the face of the earth. And in the second place, we must be prepared to make very considerable allowance for our European fellow-subjects, because their position in this country is surrounded by difficult and complicated questions, not merely of a political but of a social character, which tend more or less to keep the two communities asunder in spite of the best efforts of the leaders of European no less than of native society. Gentlemen, so long as our European friends come to this country as merely temporary residents, so long as they come here merely for the purpose of trade, commerce or of a profession, so long as they do not look upon India as a country in whose welfare they are permanently interested, so long it will be impossible for us to expect that the majority of the Europeans should fraternize with us upon all great public questions and it has, therefore, always seemed to me that one of the greatest, the most difficult, the most complicated and, at the same time, one of the most important problems to be solved is, how to make our European friends look upon India as in some sense their own country, even by adoption. For, Gentlemen, if we could but induce our retired merchants, engineers, doctors, solicitors, barristers, judges and civilians to make India permanently their home, what an amount of talent and ability, political experience and ripe judgement we should retain in India for the benefit of us all. All these great questions in regard to the financial drain on India, and those questions arising from jealousy of races and the rivalry for public employment, would at once disappear. And when we speak of the poverty of India, because of the draining away of vast sums of money from India to England, it has always seemed to me strange that so little thought should be bestowed upon the question of the poverty of our resources, caused by the drain

of so many men of public, political and intellectual eminence from our shores every year.

CONGRESS AND SOCIAL REFORM

Now, Gentlemen, one word as to the scope of our action and deliberations. It has been urged—solemnly urged—as an objection against our proceedings—that this Congress does not discuss the question of Social Reform. . . . And I must confess that the objection seems to me strange, seeing that this Congress is composed of the representatives, not of any one class or community, not of one part of India, but of all the different parts, and of all the different classes, and of all the different communities of India. Whereas any question of Social Reform must of necessity affect some particular part or some particular community of India only—and, therefore, Gentlemen, it seems to me, that although we, Musalmans, have our own social problems to solve, just as our Hindu and Parsi friends have theirs, yet these questions can be best dealt with by the leaders of the particular communities to which they relate. I, therefore, think, Gentlemen, that the only wise and, indeed, the only possible course we can adopt is to confine our discussions to such questions as affect the whole of India at large, and to abstain from the discussion of questions that affect a particular part or a particular community only.

[From A. M. Zaidi, ed., *Congress Presidential Addresses* (New Delhi: Indian Institute of Applied Political Research, 1985), 1:42–48.]

THE CONGRESS PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS OF SAYANI

Like Tyabji, Sayani wanted educated Muslims to join forces with Hindus and others in the Congress, while at the same time supporting efforts to raise their own community through education and reform efforts within the community. In his well-articulated presidential address, he rejected Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan's advice to Muslims to boycott the Congress and to place their trust in the government.

It is imagined by some persons that all, or almost all, the Musalmans of India, are against the Congress movement. That is not true. Indeed, by far the largest part do not know what the Congress Movement is. Education of any sort or kind is conspicuous by its absence amongst them, and their habitual apathy has kept them from understanding the movement at all. . . . It will be sufficient here to state that one infinitely small class of persons who have received liberal education through the medium of the English language, and another equally infinitely small class of persons who have received no education whatever through the medium of the English language, but who have acquired a smattering of what they are pleased to consider education through the Hindustani language,

have considered it a fashionable thing to abuse the Congress and Congressmen as such. There being thus two different classes of malcontents, if they may be so-called, the grounds of their opposition are naturally different, nay even inconsistent, with each other. There is a third class, also a small one at present, who have recently risen from their apathy and are honestly endeavouring to educate themselves in the right direction and are destined soon to come to the front and, it may safely be surmised, will become as enthusiastic supporters of the Congress movement; . . . but this address will confine itself to the two classes first mentioned. . . . An advocate of the views of the first two classes might well be supposed, if he ever cared to put his views systematically, to place the case for the Mohamedans in the following way:

Before the advent of the British in India, the Musalmans were the rulers of the country. The Musalmans had, therefore, all the advantages appertaining to the ruling class. The sovereign and the chiefs were their co-religionists, and so were the great landlords and the great officials. The court language was their own. Every place of trust and responsibility, or carrying influence and high emoluments was by birthright theirs. The Hindu did occupy some position, but the Hindu holders of position were but the tenants-at-will of the Musalmans. The Musalmans had complete access to the sovereigns and to the chiefs. They could, and did, often eat at the same table with them. They could also, and often did, intermarry. The Hindus stood in awe of them. Enjoyment and influence and all the good things of the world were theirs. Into the best-regulated kingdoms, however, as into the best-regulated societies and families, misfortunes would intrude and misfortunes did intrude into this happy Musalman Rule. By a stroke of misfortune, the Musalmans had to abdicate their position and descend to the level of their Hindu fellow-countrymen. The Hindus who had before stood in awe of their Musalman masters were thus raised a step by the fall of their said masters and with their former awe dropped their courtesy also. The Musalmans, who are a very sensitive race, naturally resented the treatment and would have nothing to do either with their rulers or with their fellow-subjects. Meanwhile the noble policy of the new rulers of the country introduced English education into the country. The learning of an entirely unknown foreign language, of course, required hard application and industry. The Hindus were accustomed to this, as even under the Musalman Rule, they had practically to master a foreign tongue, and so easily took to the new education. But the Musalmans had not yet become accustomed to this sort of thing, and were, moreover, not then in a mood to learn, much less to learn anything that required hard work and application, especially as they had to work harder than their former subjects, the Hindus. Moreover, they resented competing with the Hindus, whom they had till recently regarded as their inferiors. The result was that so far as education was concerned, the Musalmans who were once superior to the Hindus now actually became their inferiors. Of course,

they grumbled and groaned, but the irony of fate was inexorable. The stern realities of life were stranger than fiction. The Musalmans were gradually ousted from their lands, their offices; in fact, everything was lost save their honour. The Hindus, from a subservient state, came into the lands, offices and other worldly advantages of their former masters. Their exultation knew no bounds, and they trod upon the heels of their former masters. The Musalmans would have nothing to do with anything in which they might have to come into contact with the Hindus. They were soon reduced to a state of utter poverty. Ignorance and apathy seized hold of them while the fall of their former greatness rankled in their hearts. This represents the train of thought which preoccupied the mind of many who would otherwise be well disposed towards this movement; all will admit that though they might object to particular statements, on the whole there is an element of truth which explains the Mohamadan depression. . . .

The Government of India, that is, the English Gentlemen, both in England and in India, directly concerned in carrying on the administration of India, became alarmed at this state of things. The English people, generally, were grieved at the mistaken, yet noble, race of Indian Musalmans thus going fast to ruin. Despatch after despatch was sent to India to do something for the Musalmans. Special facilities were ordered. Some Musalmans were after all found willing to receive liberal education, and these in their turn organised themselves into a body to educate others, and thus arose the educated class of Musalmans. The Musalmans are noted for their gratitude. Some persons seem to have put it into their heads that Government as a body disapproved of their subjects criticising the measures of the administration. Hence that educated class, honestly, though mistakenly, opposes the Congress movement. As to the second class, their interest lies in keeping the Musalmans ignorant, so as to turn such ignorance and the consequent credulity to their own advantage.

ALLEGED MOHAMEDAN OBJECTION TO THE CONGRESS

The following appear to be the objections of the Musalmans to the Congress:

1. That it is against their religion to join the Congress, as by joining the Congress they will be joining the Hindus who are not Musalmans.
2. That it is against their religion to join the Congress, as by joining the Congress they will be joining a movement opposed to Government, a thing which is opposed to their religion, which directs obedience and loyalty to Government, albeit Government may not be treating them properly.
3. That it is against their religion to learn the English language.
4. That the success of the Congress would weaken the British Rule, and might eventually end in the overthrow of British Power and the substitution of Hindu Rule.

5. That Government is against the Congress movement; that in addition to the duty of loyalty, the Musalmans owe the duty of gratitude to Government for giving them a liberal education; therefore by joining the Congress, the Musalmans would be guilty of the sin of ingratitude towards Government.

6. That the Congress does not adequately represent all the races of India.

7. That the motives of the persons constituting the Congress are not honest.

8. That the aims and objects of the Congress are not practical.

9. That the Congress is not important enough to deal satisfactorily with the subjects it takes up.

10. That the modes of Government prevailing in the West, namely, examination, representation, and election, are not adapted to India.

11. That such modes are not adapted to Musalmans.

12. That the result of the application of Western methods to India would be to place all offices under Government in the power of the Hindus, and the Musalmans would be completely ousted from Government employment.

13. That Government employment should be conferred not on the test of examinations, but by selection on the ground of race, position of the family, and other social and local considerations.

14. That public distinctions, such as seats on the Legislative Councils, Municipal Boards, and other public bodies should be conferred not by the test of election, but by nomination based on the ground of race, and social influence and importance.

15. That inasmuch as the Congress is a representative body, and inasmuch as the Hindus formed the majority of the population, the Congress will necessarily be swamped by the Hindus, and the resolutions of the Congress will, to all intents and purposes, be the resolutions of the Hindus, and the Musalmans' voice will be drowned, and, therefore, if the Musalmans join the Congress, they will not only not be heard, but will be actually assisting in supporting Hindus to pass resolutions against the interest of the Musalmans, and to give colour to such resolutions as the resolutions of Hindus and Musalmans combined, and thus aiding in passing resolutions against themselves and misleading Government into believing that the Musalmans are in favour of such resolutions.

16. That Musalman boys have to learn the languages appertaining to their religion before joining schools; they are, therefore, at a disadvantage in the start for English education as compared with the Hindus. That the result is, that the Hindus pass the examinations, and as Government employment is given upon the test of examinations, the Musalmans are necessarily ousted from Government employment, and it follows that the test of examination is not a fair test.

17. That as employments are given on the test of examinations, the result is that Hindus get such employment, and even in districts where the majority of the population are Musalmans, the Hindus form the subordinate officialdom.

That the Hindus being hostile to the Musalmans, lord it over them, and the Musalmans are naturally grieved to be lorded over by the Hindus, that in many cases these Hindus are from the lower strata of society, and in that case they tyrannise the more and thus aggravate the harsh treatment of the Musalmans. That the result is that the Musalmans, and amongst them Musalmans descended from royal and noble families, are mortified at being not only ruled over, but even molested by and tyrannised over, in all manner of ways by Hindus, and Hindus of the lowest orders.

ANSWERS TO MOHAMEDAN OBJECTIONS

1. Musalmans in the past—Musalmans not in name only but orthodox true Musalmans—constantly travelled in foreign lands and mixed with all the nations of the world. The Mussalmans in India are the descendants of the Musalmans who thus travelled to and settled in India, and of the Hindus whom such Musalmans converted to Islam. All the Musalmans in India have always lived side by side with the Hindus and mixed with them and even cooperated with them, both during the period of the Musalman Rule, as also since then. In fact, both the Musalmans and the Hindus, as also older races residing in this country, are all equally the inhabitants of one and the same country, and are thus bound to each other by ties of a common nativity. . . . Both the Musalmans and the Hindus are subjects of the same sovereign and living under the protection of the same laws, and are equally affected by the same administration. The object of the Congress is to give expression to the political demands of the subjects, and to pray that their political grievances may be redressed and their political disabilities may be removed. . . . It is a most meritorious work, a work of the highest charity. . . . The only question is whether there should be two separate organisations, Musalman and non-Musalman, both simultaneously doing the same work . . . or whether there should be a joint organisation. Obviously, the latter is preferable, especially as the Congress has no concern whatever with the religion or the religious convictions of any of its members.

2. It is not true that the Congress movement is a movement in opposition to Government. It is a movement for the purpose of expressing the grievances of the subjects to Government in a legal and constitutional manner, and for the purpose of asking Government to fulfil promises made by Government . . . ; it is the duty of all truly loyal subjects—subjects desirous of seeing the Government maintained in its power—to inform Government of their own wants and wishes as it is also the duty of Government to ascertain the wants and wishes of subjects. . . .

3. Language is but the medium of expression. Orthodox and true Musalmans have in their time learned the Greek, the Latin, and other languages. There is, therefore, nothing against learning any language. In fact, many Musalmans of

India, indeed, most of them learn and speak languages other than the language of their religion. The objection, therefore, against learning the English language, which is moreover the language of our rulers, is so absurd on the face of it, that it need not be further adverted to.

4. The object of the Congress has already been stated. The success of the Congress, as has also been stated, instead of weakening Government, will only contribute towards the greater permanence of British rule in India. . . .

5. It is the duty of all good boys, who have by the liberal policy of their fathers been enabled to receive a liberal education, to repay the kindness of their fathers, by assisting their fathers in the management of their affairs with the aid of such education and by contributing to the maintenance and welfare of the family by all honest means in their power. Similarly, it is the duty of those subjects who have received a liberal education with the aid of Government, to repay the kindness of Government by assisting Government in the proper discharge of its high functions by informing Government of the shoals and rocks lying ahead in its path. . . .

6. If the Congress does not, as is alleged, adequately represent all the races, surely the fault lies, not on the shoulders of the Congress leaders who invite all the races, but on the shoulders of those races themselves who turn a deaf ear to such invitation, and prefer not to respond to it. It is the duty of such races, in response to such invitation, to attend the Congress and not blame the Congress when, in fact, they ought to blame themselves.

7. All public bodies, assembled in public meetings, desirous of giving every publicity to their proceedings and even keeping a public record of its transactions, ought to be judged by their sayings and doings. It is not right or proper to attribute to such bodies improper motives, unless such motive can be fairly and reasonably inferred from their sayings or doings or both. . . .

8. As to the aims and objects of the Congress not being practical, it is a well known fact that public attention has been drawn to the demands of the Congress, and not only the classes but even the masses have already been awakened to a sense of their political grievances and disabilities. Government has also been pleased to take into its favourable consideration the demands of the Congress, and has partially conceded the expansion of Legislative Councils and introduced the element of election therein. . . .

9. As to the Congress not being important enough to deal with the subjects it takes up, it will not be denied that the Congress contains in its ranks some of the most educated, most wealthy and most influential men of the day, some of whom have occupied—and occupied honourably—public offices of trust and importance, and most of whom are leaders of their respective centres. In fact, in the Congress camp one comes across legislators, municipal councillors, rich zamindars, extensive merchants, renowned lawyers, eminent doctors, experienced publicists, indeed, representatives of every industry and every profession in the land. . . .

10. As to the modes of government prevailing in the West not being adapted to India, the position stands as follows: In a primary state of society, whilst a particular small nation, confined to a narrow strip of territory, is governed by a single ruler, who generally belongs to that nation and is residing in that territory, as the nation is not a numerous one and the territory not a large one, the ruler is necessarily in daily and constant touch with his subjects. . . . As the nation, however, increases in numbers, as the territory is enlarged and the needs of society become more numerous and more complicated, the number of the posts to be filled becomes greater, and the qualifications required for the proper performance of the posts grow higher and are of diverse character. The touch of the ruler with each one of the ruled gets less and less, and the ruler cannot possibly keep himself personally abreast of a knowledge of the increased and complicated needs of the people. He becomes, in fact, less qualified to properly fill up all the posts, and he is compelled to delegate this part of his duty to others.

In course of time, he discovers that it is not a very satisfactory thing to nominate to posts by means of deputies and that some definite method of selection must be substituted. . . . Thus it happens that all other qualifications such as of family, standing and position and others come to be dispensed with, and the test of public examinations, that is, of personal merit alone, as tested by such examinations, is substituted. It may be conceded at once that it is not a perfect or infallible test. It is a choice of evils.

In order, however, to guard so far as possible against the evil of dispensing with the other considerations, a certain proportion of the posts is reserved to be filled up by the original method of nomination and the examination test is resorted to for filling up initial posts alone, and promotion is guided by seniority and merit combined. The circumstances above set forth are not peculiar to any particular country or climate, but are equally applicable to all, and it is not correct to say that the above method is a peculiarly Western method and not applicable or adapted to India. In fact, in China, which is peculiarly an Eastern country, the same method has been of universal application for many centuries past. . . .

11. As to the modes of government prevailing in the West not being adapted to Musalmans, the observations in answer to objection No. 10 also apply to this objection. The Musalmans may be reminded that our Holy Prophet did not name a successor. He left it to the believers to elect one for themselves. The Caliph or the successor was originally freely chosen by the free suffrages of the believers and was responsible to them for his acts. In later times this practice was altered, and the Caliphs were made hereditary; but this was done by the confidence and the consent of the believers. . . . According to Musalman Law, if the Caliph departs from these traditions, the body of the learned (Ulema) is armed with the right of remonstrating, and is even able to depose him. Amongst these traditions, there is one which makes it obligatory on the Caliph not to do,

or even to resolve on, any act without first seeking the advice of the chiefs of the tribes and the doctors of the law—a principle very characteristic of Representative Government. According to Muslim Law, the Caliph is bound to be just, to respect the liberties of the people, to love his subjects, to *consider their needs* and *listen to their grievances*. . . .

Election and Representation as also Universal Brotherhood are the characteristics of Islam and ought not to be objected to by Musalmans. All Musalmans are equal, and if they want any employment, they must, like the rest, pass public examinations. If they want any position of rank, they must endeavour to be fit for such position and resort to election like the rest. . . .

In fact, even in India we find that when Musalmans do really take to liberal education, they generally equal, if not even surpass, the other races, and that Musalmans are good not only in matters requiring muscle and valour, but also mental powers and intellectual vigour, and the Musalman community of India can produce distinguished and deeply learned scholars, . . . and here it may be remarked in passing that if Musalmans in India have a few more leaders of educational advancement, of the calibre and energy, and persistence and devotion, of the type of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan . . . Musalman education is bound to prosper. The Musalmans may further contend that in elections they will be swamped. All that may be said here is that they are mistaken in thinking so. They have simply to try, and they will find that they will have no reason to complain. . . .

Objections 12, 13, 14 and 16 have already been answered.

15. It does not follow that, because the Hindus form the majority of the Congress, that the Resolutions of the Congress will be the Resolutions of the Hindus. It is a standing rule of the Congress, solemnly passed and recorded that if any proposal is disapproved of by the bulk of either the Hindus or the Mussalmans, the same shall not be carried. . . . Again, so long as the Congress leaders happen to be men of education and enlightenment, men of approved conduct and wide experience, men, in fact, who have a reputation to lose, the Congress will never be allowed to run its course for the benefit of sectional, private or party purposes. Again, if the Mussalmans attend Congress meetings, surely the Congress shall be bound to hear and to give careful consideration to Mussalman views, and arguments founded on facts and reason are bound to prevail. . . .

The Mussalmans, however, instead of raising puerile and imaginary objections from a distance, should attend Congress meetings and see for themselves what is going on in such meetings; indeed, they will find that even when one member puts forward cogent reasons in opposition to the proposal, such proposal is eventually dropped.

17. If the complaint in regard to the conduct referred to in the objection be correct, it may be mentioned that such conduct is not popular to any particular race.

It is in the nature of things that persons of low origin, born and brought up in the atmosphere of low morals, should, on finding themselves suddenly

clothed with the authority of the Sircar, get their heads turned and be led into playing the tyrant. The less the education they have received, and the smaller the emoluments their posts carry, the greater their superciliousness, the more marked their contempt for others. Cringing to superior authority, and lording it over the people who have anything to do officially with them, are the distinguished traits of these posts of society. Persons of high birth and culture, who have seen better days and better society, may sometimes be naturally inclined to give to these supercilious tyrants a sound thrashing so as to make them remember it to the end of their days and prevent them from reverting to their evil ways. But persons of high birth and culture naturally recoil from doing anything which may savour of vulgarity, and hence their silent sufferings. . . . But no Government, however watchful and however anxious it may be, can possibly completely eradicate the evil, the true remedies for the removal of which are as follows: The standard of education required of candidates for subordinate official posts should be gradually raised higher and higher so as to compel the candidates to have better education, better culture, in order to make them forget the evil surroundings of their previous life and to take to a better appreciation of the moral law of nature. At the same time education should be disseminated all over the land, and the standard of education of the masses, should be gradually and steadily raised, so that the masses, armed with the weapon of education, may not have meekly to submit to petty tyrannies, but may know how to protect themselves against them and to bring the offenders to a proper sense of their puniness and the impropriety of their conduct by means of union and the agitation of their grievances, and in legally provokable cases by bringing the culprits to their well-deserved punishment.

[From A. M. Zaidi, ed., *Congress Presidential Addresses*, 1:318–320, 322–335.]

ROKEYA SAKHAWAT HOSSAIN: A FEMINIST UTOPIA AND THE CHALLENGE TO WOMEN'S SECLUSION

Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain (1880–1932) was an innovator in three significant respects: she was the first important feminist of Bengali Muslim society; her feminist utopia predates by ten years the better-known work by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland*; and her collection of vignettes describing the life of secluded women is the first book written in Bengali by a Muslim Bengali woman.

Hossain grew up in an elite Urdu-speaking Muslim household in Rangpur district. She and her sister defied their father by learning Bengali in secret; her sister was discovered and married off prior to her fifteenth birthday, a fate that horrified Rokeya. Her older brother aided her aspirations by teaching her English and Bengali late at night; her husband, to whom she was married at age sixteen, also encouraged her literary education, as well as her mixing, outside the confines of purdah, with Hindus and Christians. After his early death in 1909, she founded a girls' school in

Calcutta, formed the Muslim Women's Association (Anjuman-e Khavatin-e Islam), and wrote a number of essays and books on the problems of Muslim women in Bengal—many of which derived, she felt, from the lack of education due to enforced seclusion. Hossain believed that social reform remained crucial to women's lives, in spite of the fact that the political climate of India had changed by the early twentieth century, away from reformist platforms and toward radical political action. Indeed, Muslim men had been almost completely silent on the condition of Muslim women until her publications forced them to comment and react. Her girls' school still functions in Kolkata.

MEN IN THE ZENANA

Sultana's Dream was first published in 1905 in an English periodical based in Madras, and then in 1908 as a book from a Calcutta press. Although Hossain wrote it to show off her proficiency in English to her husband, the significance of the work lies in her challenge to the existing patriarchal social order, which she satirized by the creation of a woman-centered utopia in which men are not absent, but rather are secluded, and fit only for looking after the children. Sister Sara, the narrator's guide through Ladyland, asks Hossain incredulously how it is that in Hossein's own society men, who are insane, are allowed outside.

One evening I was lounging in an easy chair in my bedroom and thinking lazily of the condition of Indian womanhood. I am not sure whether I dozed off or not. But, as far as I remember, I was wide awake. I saw the moonlit sky sparkling with thousands of diamondlike stars, very distinctly.

All on a sudden a lady stood before me; how she came in, I do not know. I took her for my friend, Sister Sara.

"Good morning," said Sister Sara. I smiled inwardly as I knew it was not morning, but starry night. However, I replied to her, saying, "How do you do?"

"I am all right, thank you. Will you please come out and have a look at our garden?"

I looked again at the moon through the open window, and thought there was no harm in going out at that time. The menservants outside were fast asleep just then, and I could have a pleasant walk with Sister Sara.

I used to have my walks with Sister Sara, when we were at Darjeeling. Many a time did we walk hand in hand and talk lightheartedly in the botanical gardens there. I fancied Sister Sara had probably come to take me to some such garden, and I readily accepted her offer and went out with her.

When walking I found to my surprise that it was a fine morning. The town was fully awake and the streets alive with bustling crowds. I was feeling very shy, thinking I was walking in the street in broad daylight, but there was not a single man visible. . . .

"I feel somewhat awkward," I said, in a rather apologizing tone, "as being a purdahnishin [secluded] woman I am not accustomed to walking about unveiled."

"You need not be afraid of coming across a man here. This is Ladyland, free from sin and harm. Virtue itself reigns here." . . .

I became very curious to know where the men were. I met more than a hundred women while walking there, but not a single man.

"Where are their men?" I asked her.

"In their proper places. Where they ought to be."

"Pray let me know what you mean by 'their proper places.'"

"Oh, I see my mistake, you cannot know our customs, as you were never here before. We shut our men indoors."

"Just as we are kept in the zenana?"

"Exactly so."

"How funny." I burst into a laugh. Sister Sara laughed too.

"But dear Sultana, how unfair it is to shut in the harmless women, and let loose the men."

"Why? It is not safe for us to come out of the zenana, as we are naturally weak."

"Yes, it is not safe so long as there are men about the streets, nor is it so when a wild animal enters a marketplace."

"Of course not."

"Suppose that some lunatics escape from the asylum and begin to do all sorts of mischief to men, horses, and other creatures: in that case what will your countrymen do?"

"They will try to capture them and put them back into their asylum."

"Thank you! And do you not think it wise to keep sane people inside an asylum and let loose the insane?"

"Of course not!" said I, laughing lightly.

"As a matter of fact, in your country this very thing is done! Men, who do or at least are capable of doing no end of mischief, are let loose and the innocent women shut up in the zenana! How can you trust those untrained men out of doors!"

"We have no hand or voice in the management of our social affairs. In India man is lord and master. He has taken to himself all powers and privileges and shut up the women in the zenana."

"Why do you allow yourselves to be shut up?"

"Because it cannot be helped as they are stronger than women."

"A lion is stronger than a man, but it does not enable him to dominate the human race. You have neglected the duty you owe to yourselves, and you have lost your natural rights by shutting your eyes to your own interest."

"But my dear Sister Sara, if we do everything by ourselves, what will the men do then?"

"They should not do anything, excuse me; they are fit for nothing, only catch them and put them into the zenana."

"But would it be very easy to catch and put them inside the four walls?" said I. "And even if this were done, would all their business—political and commercial—also go with them into the zenana?"

Sister Sara made no reply. She only smiled sweetly. Perhaps she thought it was useless to argue with one who was no better than a frog in a well. . . .

[From Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, *Sultana's Dream*,
and *Selections from The Secluded Ones*, ed. and trans.
R. Jahan (New York: Feminist Press, 1988), 7–10.]

THE SECLUDED ONES: STORIES OF PURDAH

The Secluded Ones (*Avarodhbasini*) is a collection of forty-seven nonfictional anecdotes about Muslim and Hindu purdah customs over north India. First serialized in 1929 and then published as a book, *The Secluded Ones* demonstrates Hossain's clear antipathy toward purdah, an attitude that engendered strong reactions from her readers, ranging from embarrassment to stinging critique. Three of her reports are excerpted here.

REPORT EIGHT

Once, a house caught fire. The mistress of the house had the presence of mind to collect her jewelry in a handbag and hurry out of the bedroom. But at the door, she found the courtyard full of strangers fighting the fire. She could not come out in front of them. So she went back to her bedroom with the bag and hid under her bed. She burned to death but did not come out. Long live purdah!

REPORT FOURTEEN

The following incident happened about twenty-two years ago. An aunt, twice-removed, of my husband, was going to Patna from Bhagalpur; she was accompanied by her maid only. At Kiul railway junction, they had to change trains. While boarding the train, my aunt-in-law stumbled against her voluminous burqa and fell on the railway track. Except her maid, there was no woman at the station. The railway porters rushed to help her up but the maid immediately stopped them by imploring in God's name not to touch her mistress. She tried to drag her mistress up by herself but was unable to do so. The train waited for only half an hour but no more.

The Begum's body was smashed—her burqa torn. A whole stationful of men witnessed this horrible accident—yet none of them was permitted to assist her. Finally her mangled body was taken to a luggage shed. Her maid wailed piteously. After eleven hours of unspeakable agony she died. What a gruesome way to die!

REPORT EIGHTEEN

A doctor from Lahore has thus described his experience of purdah:

Whenever he went to visit a patient in a purdah house, he would find two maidservants holding a thick blanket in front of the bed. He would put his hand below the blanket and extend it to the other side of the blanket. The patient would then put her wrist in his hand to enable him to take her pulse. (A certain non-purdah lady asked me once, "If there was no woman doctor available, how would you let a male doctor examine your tongue? You could not possibly make a hole in the blanket and protrude your tongue through that hole?")

[The doctor told me:] "A certain Begum was down with pneumonia. I said, 'the condition of the lungs will have to be examined. I could examine it from the back.' The nawab [head of the family] ordered, 'ask the maid to put the stethoscope wherever necessary.' Of course, it is common knowledge that the stethoscope has to be shifted in various positions before any diagnosis is possible. Yet I had to comply with the nawab's commands. The maid took the end of the stethoscope inside the blanket and put it in place. After a few minutes I was getting really worried at not hearing any sound. For once, I decided to be audacious and lifted the corner of the blanket nearest me. To my consternation and disgust, I found the stethoscope resting on the Begum's waist. I was so irritated that I left the room immediately. The nawab Sahib had the gall to ask me what I made of the case! What the —, did he expect me to be omniscient?"

[From *Sultana's Dream, and Selections from The Secluded Ones*, 26–27, 28–29.]

CORNELIA SORABJI: INDIA'S FIRST WOMAN BARRISTER

Cornelia Sorabji (1866–1954) was a remarkable and energetic woman who by force of intellect and tenacity made her way into the Indian and British legal profession. She was born in Nasik in the Bombay Presidency to a Parsi Christian father and mother who were committed to British religious, educational, and social reforms. Educated at mission schools, she showed great promise, and gained backing from influential Britishers in India and Great Britain to continue her education as far as she could go. She was the first female graduate of Bombay University. In the later nineteenth century there were serious limitations on women's paths into higher education and the professions. Teaching was possible, and medicine was slowly opening up. But the law was closed.

She received a scholarship to enter Somerville College at Oxford, where she passed the Bachelor of Civil Laws examination in 1892, and she returned home to India in 1894, full of enthusiasm for the British project of "civilizing" women and Indian society. She accepted an invitation from the Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda to survey the success of compulsory education recently introduced in his state; this launched her long career with the princely states and the legal rights of their

"Purdahnashins," women confined to the zenana and excluded entirely from the gaze of all strange men.

Hoping to gain legal recognition, Sorabji took the LLB examination of Bombay University in 1897 and the Pleader's examination of the Allahabad High Court in 1899. But despite her successes she was not recognized as a barrister until the English law that barred women from practicing was changed in 1924, at which point she became India's first female barrister, in Calcutta. Even then, however, she was confined to preparing opinions, rather than presenting cases before the court.

An Anglophile and supporter of the Raj, Sorabji went back and forth between India and Great Britain many times, and had friends in high places in both countries. She even traveled to the United States to speak about the virtues of the British Raj, at the request of government officials. Consistent with such views, she was not in favor of Gandhian politics; she found Gandhi a misguided idealist and felt that India's best hope for the future lay in its protection by the Empire. Sarojini Naidu criticized Sorabji for arguing against the universal franchise for women (Sorabji argued that many women were not ready for such a public role), and Annie Besant and Lajpat Rai asserted that she did not understand the Hindu traditions that she was attempting to undercut. Her nephew, Richard Sorabji, well articulates her contribution, as seen from the vantage point of the early twenty-first century: "Although Cornelia was on the wrong side of history, failing to recognize the greatness of Gandhi and of the Congress movement, her approach to welfare has seemed to me still very relevant to modern India. . . . Her gradualism in the political sphere might have been mistaken, but in the social sphere it may still have a lot of values."¹⁵

ADVOCATING FOR WOMEN

In her autobiography, *India Calling*, Sorabji recounts her life from her early childhood until the 1930s. The selections below are incidents from 1894 and 1897, and focus on her struggle to enter the legal profession in India.

On my return to my parents' home . . . I found my foot upon "the next step." My Mother and I had just come in from a drive one evening when a woman appeared from behind the Croton bushes in the garden and threw herself at my Mother's feet.

"We are in trouble, and they say you have a 'Ballister' daughter. Will she help us?"

(Bazaar and servants' gossip know nothing of legal distinctions, and the title is not to be taken as sanctioned by anyone in the family.)

She told her story. She was of a woodcutter's family. She and her sister-in-law lived together. Her brother was murdered. The Police said that his wife had killed him: and the Magistrate had committed her for trial.

"But truly she had not done that dreadful thing. Who should know, if not I? We were together all day, and my sister-in-law was cooking her husband's

food at the time that they say she was killing him. . . . Save her!" and she fell to weeping.

"Can you help her?" asked my Mother.

"I do not know. I will discover."

So we told the woman to return later. The trial was to be at the approaching Sessions: and I wrote to Mr. Crowe, the District and Sessions Judge, asking if I might defend the woman, not as having any legal qualification, but as a "person for the defense of the accused"—the Statutory Law of British India, read with the definitions section, allowed an accused any "person" for his defense, and "person" was defined as male or female.

He said he must refer the question to the High Court of Bombay, as it had never before arisen.

The High Court said, I believe, "Have we indeed left women that loophole!" but could not deny that "the Law allowed it."

The week of the trial was, without comparison, the most exciting and the most exhausting of my entire life. . . .

I believed my Client innocent: and I lay awake at night contemplating the rope which my inefficiency would put round her neck: for of course my glooms refused to consider any "lifer" alternative.

The Prosecution was on its mettle. "A woman indeed for the defense!" and though the Hindu male of those days had a profound contempt for any woman straying into male preserves, he nevertheless took precautions. The pick of the Hindu local bar, with leading Counsel from Bombay (a friend of the Public Prosecutor's), confronted a humble "person" as she timidly found her way to Counsel's table on the opening day. . . .

The story of the Prosecution was indeed well supported. The police had found the body and the various pools of blood the morning after a murder supposed to have been committed at eight o'clock the previous night. Moreover, it was committed with a cutting instrument which was, in fact, my client's (a gadget used in the preparation of vegetables for the pot); and there were not a few villagers who swore to convincing details.

My own story included the fact that the murdered woodcutter lived in perfect harmony with his wife in a hut on the edge of a sloping wood. The murdered man had lent a considerable sum of money to a brother woodcutter with whom he used to go to work in clearings about a mile distant from their several huts.

He had occasion the week previous to his death to ask the borrower for return of the money. Also, the day before the murder, the debtor had begged the loan of a vegetable cutter from the accused, saying that his wife had broken hers.

The night of the murder there was a terrific monsoon storm, the woodcutter did not return in the cowdust hour, as he was wont to do, and after waiting for him till far into the night the women ate their own meal and went to bed,

thinking he had taken refuge from the storm in the hut of some *brathari*—other woodcutters who lived near the clearing.

Early the next morning the police rapped on the door, and arrested the accused, showing her the body of her murdered husband lying not far from the hut. The debtor was with the police and had identified the woman.

The only witness I had of my version of the tale was the sister-in-law, not much use, even though cross-examination of the debtor had been helpful.

But that storm gave me an idea. I put in plans of the location, and evidence of the state of the barometer on the night of the murder. We all knew the violence of the Monsoon in the Western Ghats.

The hut was on such a sheer slope that the storm would not only have washed those well-measured pools of blood clean into a drain below, but would also have carried the body a considerable distance towards it.

For the first time, through the trial, I saw a flicker on the immobile faces of the Jurymen . . . the rope of my bad dreams untightened—a little.

The Judge made (*inter alia*) my point about the storm all right in his summing-up to the Jury. But the twenty minutes of their absence seemed to me as many years.

And how slow they were in answering his questions when they did come back!

“Gentlemen of the Jury, have you considered your verdict?”

“Yes! We are unanimous.”

Then a long pause.

“What is your verdict?”

“Not Guilty!”

I could have hugged the dear old Foreman!

I turned to my Client and said in her own tongue:

“Those Gentlemen say you have not done this thing.”

She looked at me with the reproachful eyes of a trapped gazelle—

“I always knew that I had not done it,” she said.

[Cornelia Sorabji, *India Calling: The Memories of Cornelia Sorabji, Indian's First Woman Barrister*, ed. Chandani Lokugé (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 48–52.]

About this time my Brother had returned to India from his long sojourn in the West. . . . He was a barrister and had decided to practice at the Allahabad High Court, United Provinces.

I went up North to help him settle into his house: and a thought which had for long been with me arrived at maturity. The work I was doing as a roving and privileged Practitioner of the Law was without doubt interesting; but it did not amount to beating out a path which other women could follow. It was too personal; privilege might be withheld from my successors, curiosity sated; and

to what practical purpose was the beginning of work so well worth doing, if provision were not made for others to carry on?

In the interest of professional posterity, then, a recognized title to practice at the Bar seemed a necessity; and to obtain this in British India would mean the best recommendation to confidence. . . .

As a Bachelor of Laws of the Bombay University I was entitled to be enrolled as a *Vakil* [Graduate of Law, of the Universities of any Presidency], and I made an application to this effect in 1897.

After consideration by the entire Bench . . . I was told that as the University door was not their own special High Court door, the Court hesitated to make an innovation on the ground that I had cited. But if I would do the High Court Pleader's examination (their own creation), they would have power to act.

By this time I was sick to death of examinations, and this new one included proficiency in *Shikasta*. Now *Shikasta* (lit. "broken writing," or writing "in ruins") is the running-hand of the Persian character, and a nightmare to decipher. Dots and strikes, both so essential to the distinguishing of letter from letter, with other characterizations, are omitted: and letters are joined which are only recognizable apart.

Shikasta is used in Court documents, though the language of the Courts is now Urdu: and its inclusion in the tests for this special High Court Examination was obvious.

Yes—I was thoroughly sick of examinations; but there could be no question of my not complying with the new condition—"one more river to cross"—and I buckled to the re-study of Hindu and Mahommedan Law, of the rubbish-heap of codified British-Indian law, and the acquisition of *Shikasta*.

The bright spot of the adventure was my dear old Moslem Munshi who taught me Persian, Urdu, and the reading of Court documents.

He was a character, and deserves a monograph. In due course I passed my Examination: but the High Court said, most shame-facedly, that "on reconsideration" they felt it would be impertinent of an Indian High Court to admit women to the Rolls before England had given the lead.

It was a bad jar, and I could have said much in protest. After all, in matters of this kind, the advantage of India lay in the very newness to which I suppose the Court referred; in having, that is to say, unlike England, no traditions to out-range. She was therefore herself in the position of Leader; and it would have been fun if that particular Court had recognized this!

But protest would have been no use. I was a single individual. At that time I could not produce even one other woman student of the Law: and I had no assurance that other women would want to follow my Profession.

There was nothing for it but to continue being a "rover," working from the end of a need to be met, not from that of an equal title with men to the reward of legal work.

And with this intention I set myself to collecting the opinions of experienced judges, lawyers, and administrators all over India.

I wrote first to such as I knew personally. I had found, said I, this or that—not stating my worst cases—instances where although the most efficient of men lawyers were indeed available, *Purdahnashins* had no possible means of access to or contact with them, the result being needless hardship and injustice.

I kept the lights as low as possible.

The answers were most gratifying:

“Oh, but we know worse . . .” They also added instances where the seclusion of women had prevented important evidence from being put before the Court, e.g. in property cases where the rights of women were in question.

Purdahnashins of the highest status, in strictest seclusion, are excused attendance as witnesses in Court. Their evidence is taken at their homes by a Commission. Judges and Lawyers both expressed a doubt on occasions as to the identity of the witness thus examined. The men might not see her for themselves. Again, how did they know that the witness spoke freely? They could not tell who were shut in with her behind the purdah: or what fears and coercions assailed her.

They might not even hear her voice—a third person being the medium of both question and answer.

When the witness attended Court, there was the like difficulty; she came in a palanquin accompanied by a male (claiming to be a relation) who acted as “carrier” during her examination, speaking to her through a slit in the doors of the palanquin and broadcasting her answers to the Court.

One of my correspondents, a Parsee Judge from Bombay (the least secluded of Provinces), told me an amusing story in this connection.

He had his suspicions during the progress of a certain case about the witness in a palanquin, and ordered the palanquin to be taken to his chambers for examination of the occupant by the matron of a hospital.

“You are quite safe,” said the Matron, the palanquin duly deposited in the Judge’s Chambers behind closed doors. “Come out now.”

She pushed back the palanquin shutters, and drew the curtain—a bearded old man stumbled to his feet and confronted her!

[Cornelia Sorabji, *India Calling*, 77–80.]

SAROJINI NAIDU: CONGRESS NIGHTINGALE AND CHAMPION OF WOMEN’S RIGHTS

Sarojini Naidu (1879–1949) was a Congress leader, poet, champion of equality of the sexes, and spokesperson for Hindu–Muslim amity. Her views on many political and social issues differed greatly from those of Cornelia Sorabji, though the two were contemporaries. Sarojini came from a highly cosmopolitan family; her father,

Aghorenath, a scientist and Bengali Brahman, served as principal of Nizam College in the princely state of Hyderabad. Sarojini was the eldest of eight children in one of the most cosmopolitan and talented families in modern India. In 1901, at age twenty-one, her younger brother, Virendranath, went to England and joined the international communist movement, eventually dying (or being killed) in Stalin's USSR in 1937. Several other siblings had distinguished careers in education, accountancy, and the arts. The youngest son in the family, Harindranath, became a poet, famed actor, and communist Member of Parliament, while the youngest daughter, Suhashini, became a communist firebrand and advocate of feminism in Bombay.

Sarojini was first recognized for her poetic gifts while she was a teenager attending college in Great Britain. She mingled with the London literati and published a collection of poems in 1905, including her famous "Indian Love Song." In 1912 she sent a second collection to Edmund Gosse, and it too was published in England. Then in 1914 she was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. She also fell in love with Govindarajulu Naidu during her student years, and married him in 1898. Returning to India, she continued to write poetry until 1917, but was increasingly drawn to politics. After meeting Gokhale in 1906, she became active in politics, the early women's movement, and work with students.

While abroad a second time, recovering from ill health, she met Jinnah and began to champion Hindu-Muslim unity. Then in 1915, she met Gandhi, forging a lifelong friendship and political bond. Naidu was a powerful public speaker, and was elected Congress president in 1925. On numerous occasions she undertook missions for Gandhi: to the United States in 1928, to South Africa twice in the 1920s, and to Great Britain with him for the Second Round Table Conference in 1931.

Based in Bombay from 1920, she was a member of the Congress inner circle from the 1920s to her death in 1949. To her, as to Gandhi and many others, the division of India on the basis of religion was a terrible blow. Her last assignment was as governor of Uttar Pradesh after Independence. She was close to Gandhi and to Jawaharlal Nehru. Naidu held high the torch of equality of the sexes and of communal harmony throughout a tumultuous and fulfilling life.

EQUALITY OF SEXES

A speech from 1918 about the equality of the sexes and the desirability of giving the franchise to women is given below; another on Hindu-Muslim unity is included in chapter 7; comments on Gandhi are in chapter 6.

Men of India— . . . the demand made in the resolution I deem to be the primal right to womanhood. This resolution can be treated from the standpoint of practical politics or from the standpoint of national ideals. No matter in which way one deals with the question, I still claim that sex so far from being a disqualification to a primal right of franchise is a human right and not a monopoly

of one sex only. I put it before you not from practical consideration, not from economic consideration, but rather from the standpoint of National ideal of India. We Indians have always boasted that we were followers of the Goddesses of our land. Our teachings always inculcated the worship of the mother even before the worship of the father. What is the psychology and interpretation of that inculcation, of that doctrine, of that practice. Woman makes the Nation, on her worthiness or unworthiness, weakness or strength, ignorance or enlightenment, her cowardice or courage lies folded the destiny of her sons. . . . Is it possible, is it rational, I ask you, that the duty of a woman ends with the physical agony that she endures for the sake of her sons? Are you not aware that in every Indian house, it is the woman that is the centre of life waiting for the dawn? She is the servant of the household, she is the daily sacrifice, every day of her life of her labours, of her love and devotion to the family. Then being the servant of the family, being the high priestess of the home, being the true legislator of the destinies of India, is it logical I ask you, is it worthy of you to say that she shall face death with no courage to face life, that she shall sacrifice for the sustenance of the family within the walls of her home and yet be not afforded that primal right which is as much hers as it is yours, because she is co-responsible with you for the honour and prosperity of your country? It has been said that to give women franchise would be to rid them of feminine grace. . . . Our young men imbued with the ideals of modern thought say that woman must be given franchise because they are comrades of men. . . . I do not think that any male need have apprehension that to extend the horizon of woman's labours is to break all her power in the home. I do not think that there need be any apprehension that in granting franchise to Indian womanhood, that Indian womanhood will wrench the power belonging to man. Never, never, for we realise that men and women have separate goals and separate destinies and that just as a man can never fulfil the responsibility of a woman, a woman cannot fulfil the responsibility of man. Unless she fulfils the responsibility within her horizon and become worthy and strong and brave, there can be no fullness and completeness of National life. We ask for franchise, we ask for vote, not that we might interfere with you in your official functions, your civic duties, your public place and power, but rather that we might lay the foundation of National character in the souls of the children that we hold upon our laps and instil them with the ideas of Nationality. . . . We want the franchise to say that our education shall not be the imitation of unsuitable and alien things but rather that our Nationality shall be for enlightening our National traditions and that our National characteristics shall be the outcome of our own needs and capacities. Gentlemen, will you not show your chivalry which is justice, your nobility which is gratitude by saying to them "you, who within the shelter of our homes are Goddesses, high priestesses, the inspire[r]s of our faith, sustainers of our hopes, the flower of joy upon our breasts, O! mothers, O! sisters, O! wives, we have our feet set upon the path of freedom, we have our own vision, the distant vision of glory, light

the torch in your form and then accompany us to that distant goal to be the inspiration of progress and the reward of all our hope.”

[Speech to Bombay Special Congress, Sept. 1, 1918, moving the resolution:

“Women possessing the same qualifications . . . shall not be disqualified on account of sex.” From Verinder Grover and Ranjana Arora, eds.,

Great Women of Modern India (New Delhi: Deep and Deep, 1993), 3:57–59.]



Chapter 5

RADICAL POLITICS AND CULTURAL CRITICISM, 1880–1914

THE EXTREMISTS

As the opening of India to Western cultural influence stimulated the renaissance of Hinduism and connected India to modernizing trends in Europe, so the imposition of foreign rule also evoked powerful indigenous reactions in the political sphere. These responses involved a questioning of all types of authority, in addition to experimentation with new cultural forms.

The militant antiforeign feeling that had shown itself generally in scattered resistance to British conquest, and most powerfully in the uprisings of 1857, crystallized in the late nineteenth century in the form of the group of passionate Hindu nationalists known to others as the Extremists. This group possessed two weapons unavailable to previous militant opponents of British rule. First, they shared with their Moderate rivals the use of a common “national” language, English, and through it enjoyed the opportunities for political agitation provided by the press, the schools, and the Indian National Congress. Second, they were able to draw on the newly formulated ideals of renascent Hinduism, and to create a potent ideology out of the marriage between these ideals and the imported concept of nationalism. However, it should be noted that there were many shadings of view among the so-called Extremists and those who worked with them. Some were quite insensitive to Muslim sensibilities; others were not. Some historians have recently argued that “love of country” was an older form of loyalty in South Asia, but that the idea of an Indian nation and nationalism came later and was fused with it. During this whole period nationalism was growing not only in Europe and the United States, but in Asia as well.

Impatient to throw off the foreign yoke, the Extremists concentrated on building up mass support for the nationalist movement, particularly in Maharashtra and Bengal. To create this support and to unify the Westernized elite with the Hindu peasantry and townspeople, they appealed to three principal ties common to both the educated and the uneducated—language, history, and religion. Casting off the use of English wherever possible, they wrote and spoke in the regional languages understood by the common people. As a means of heightening patriotic fervor, they fostered pride in a glorious past, when Hindu kings and warriors ruled the land. Most effective of all, because it had the broadest appeal, was the use of religious symbolism and terminology to instill in Hindus a fervent devotion to the Motherland.

In contrast to the Moderates, the Hindu Extremists regarded such tasks as social reform and Hindu–Muslim cooperation as secondary issues that drained energies from the political struggle and weakened Hindu solidarity. But antipathy to Untouchability and the need to eliminate it were formulated by Lala Lajpat Rai, who is usually identified with the Extremists. At times the Extremists' anger at Muslim collaboration with the British spurred them to engage in overtly anti-Muslim activity, heedless of the fact that in so doing they were ruining the chances of creating an independent but undivided India. The 1905 partition of Bengal into Hindu- and Muslim-majority areas drove a further wedge between the two religious communities, for it encouraged prominent Muslims to enter into a tacit alliance with the British against Hindu ambitions (the Muslim League was founded in 1906, and its demand for separate electorates was granted in 1909). The danger that the more numerous and better-educated Hindu community would preempt the positions of power and influence in a self-governing India gave many Muslims a pressing reason to renounce their traditional hostility toward the British in favor of a friendly alliance.

Both Moderates and Extremists insisted that divided Bengal must be reunited, but the latter urged that radical measures be taken to coerce the ruling power. In essence, the Extremists' program was much like the one Gandhi introduced fifteen years later, since it was based on the principle of reducing Indian dependence on the British in every possible way. Its primary aims were the boycott of foreign goods, the exclusive use of Indian-made (or *swadeshi*—"of one's own country") articles and Indian-run institutions, the strengthening of an indigenous system of education, and, in time, the creation of a parallel government of, by, and for the Indian people. They also used methods of social and political boycott, drawing on older caste traditions to force reluctant members of the Indian community to join them.¹ But Tagore and perhaps others objected to this method of coercing cooperation in non-cooperation. This is a foretaste of Tagore's later criticisms of Gandhian methods.

Such a bold stand, coupled with the religious ideology that motivated it, captured the imagination of younger men more readily than did the cautious policies of the Moderates, and the following of the Extremists increased rapidly in numbers after 1905. Their abortive attempt to gain control of the Congress

led to a schism in that body at the 1907 session. For the next decade most of the Extremist leaders were either in jail, in exile, or in retirement, but the continuance of terrorist activity—climaxing in an attempt on the viceroy's life in 1912—showed that their influence had not waned. The rescinding of the partition of Bengal in 1911, and the altered situation produced by the First World War, made it possible for the Moderates and the Extremists to patch up their quarrel in 1916. The death in 1920 of the Extremists' greatest leader, Tilak, marked the end of an era. In that same year the Congress fell under the sway of Gandhi's unique form of leadership.

Although the heyday of the Extremists was brief, their chief contribution to modern Indian thought—the creation of a Hindu nationalism combining religious with political ideas—paved the way for the decades of Gandhi's dominance, as well as for the emergence of the two major non-Congress parties that he would try, in vain, to reconcile—the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha.

Through the years of the rise of Extremism in Indian politics, there were a variety of responses to the heavy hand of imperialism in the cultural sphere. These responses included the questioning of many traditional cultural forms and the interrogation of religious authority by both Hindus and Muslims. Notable among the experimenters and questioners were Rabindranath Tagore and Muhammad Iqbal, two of South Asia's greatest writers in modern times—and two whose work may be fruitfully compared. Influenced by Bankim Chandra Chatterji's ambitious novels, Tagore wrote novels as well, but was even more creative and successful in a number of poetic forms, in songs, and in the short story. Tagore's critiques of authority in the social, religious, and cultural spheres are expressed throughout his vast oeuvre, and are merely touched upon here. Iqbal wrote poetry, essays, and religious critiques, stimulating new understandings of Islam and of the ideal shape of the South Asian Muslim community. Both men were religious reformers and literary experimenters (in their idiosyncratic ways) who pushed forward new possibilities for imaginative understanding of the traditions that they had inherited.

In a final section, we have presented selections from an art historian and two artists who were concerned with exploring new pathways in the creative arts during this period. They are Abanindranath Tagore, a relative of Rabindranath, the important art critic and historian Ananda Coomaraswamy, and the later painter Amrita Sher-Gil.

BANKIM CHANDRA CHATTERJI: NATIONALIST AUTHOR

Gokhale's saying, "What Bengal thinks today, all India thinks tomorrow," is nowhere more applicable than in the case of the Bengali writer Bankim Chandra Chatterji (1838–1894). Although he took no part in politics, Bankim first employed the triple

appeal of language, history, and religion that enabled Hindu nationalism to win widespread support in the opening decade of the twentieth century. His historical novels in Bengali persuaded many readers that their glorious past should inspire them to achieve an equally glorious future, and demonstrated the power of the pen as an instrument for stirring up patriotic emotions in times when overt political action was impossible.

Born near Calcutta, Bankim was the son of a Brahman landlord who was a local deputy collector of revenue. A brilliant student who studied Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, Bengali, and English, he passed through the Anglicized educational system with distinction and was in 1858 one of two in Calcutta University's first graduating class. He was immediately offered a position as deputy magistrate in the Bengal administrative service, and for all but one year held this rank until his retirement in 1891—a situation that provides clear evidence of the lack of opportunity for advancement for Indians in government service. Fortunately he found an outlet for his natural talent in another direction. Throughout his career as an official, he used his spare time to write humorous sketches, stories, and novels that captured the imagination of literate Bengal. Bankim employed a new prose style that combined the virtues of Sanskritized Bengali and the vigor of the common speech and that, for the first time since the introduction of English education, made it respectable for Bengalis to write in their own mother tongue. The plots in his twelve novels are interesting and realistic, featuring love triangles; vivacious, articulate women; and examples of the destructive potential of passion. The backdrops to the main action are actual historical contexts designed to arouse Hindu pride in the past. In Bengal Bankim is considered the “father of the novel.”

Nationalism in all parts of the world has often been associated with attachment to a common language and its accompanying literary heritage. Bankim could thus be credited with quickening a Bengali, as distinct from an all-Indian, nationalism. But this distinction was rendered largely superfluous after 1905, when the agitation against the partition of Bengal took on a nationwide character and his poem “Bande Mātaram” (“Hail to the Mother”), which first appeared in his novel *Ānandamath*, became the anthem of the nationalist movement.

Ānandamath, or *The Abbey of Bliss*, his most famous (if not, from a literary point of view, his finest) novel, was serialized in a magazine in 1880 and published in 1882. A recent armed rebellion against the British in a district of Maharashtra in 1879 may have been part of the inspiration for Bankim's idea of a group of self-sacrificing, disciplined *sannyāsīs* (renouncers) who band together, eschewing family life for a time, to overthrow the reigning order. Bankim chose for his novel, however, a Bengali context, the aftermath of the famine in the early 1770s, and the “king” whom the *sannyāsī* rebels attempt to remove is the titular ruler, the Muslim nawab, not the British, who by contrast are viewed as necessary catalysts to political and social change. Later scholarship has shown that he toned down his criticism of the British in preparing the final version of the novel, and reframed the villains as Muslims. The renouncers are worshipers of martial Hindu deities—the Krishna of the *Mahābhārata* (Bankim decried the effeminate eroticism of the lover Krishna) and the Mother Goddess, whose Children (*santān*) they claim to be. For Bankim, “the Mother” of “Bande Mātaram”

referred at the same time to the land of Bengal and to the Hindu Goddess. From this fusion of the hitherto separate objects of patriotic and religious devotion sprang the central energy of modern Hindu nationalism.

In spite of all the strength of dedication and mass appeal it generated, Hindu nationalism acted as a regressive force both in hindering social reform and in exacerbating the latent hostility between Hindus and Muslims. Bankim's novels faithfully reflect these two shortcomings, for with rare exceptions they picture well-meaning reformers as fools and Muslims as knaves. Furthermore, because of its equation of the land with the Hindu Goddess, *Ānandamath*'s "Bande Mātaram" has always provoked suspicious, if not downright hostile, reactions from Muslims. In 1930 the Congress tried to prune the song of any offending "idolatrous" language, but in 1938 Jinnah made it a prerequisite for his agreement to work with Congress the dropping of the song as the slogan of the nationalist movement. Even in 1947 it was not revived, since Nehru chose the less religiously colored "Jana Gana Mana" of Rabindranath Tagore as the national anthem of independent India.

Bankim's attitude toward the British is less easy to tease out from a reading of the novel. In his own life he was chained to his clerical job out of fiscal need, but he resented the humiliating treatment he endured at the hands of his employers, as well as the pressure he felt to mould his literary creativity according to British political taste. Even the first published edition of the novel, in 1882, is kinder to the British than the earlier serialized edition. Realizing that there was much to gain from the British presence in India, such as education, public works, and the justice system, he concluded his novel with a resigned acceptance of British rule: India would be free when it experienced a moral regeneration. The stability of English rule, plus a growing pride in the Hindu past, were the twin keys to such a cultural revival, and through his novels he sought above all to contribute to this pride.

HAIL TO THE MOTHER

In the following excerpts from *Ānandamath*, Bhabananda, one of the *sannyāsīs*, reveals to a new disciple named Mahendra (who has recently, he thinks, lost his wife and daughter) the group's mission and the mystique that sustains it. After introducing Mahendra to "Bande Mātaram" in chapter 10, in chapter 11 Bhabananda brings him to Satyananda, the leader of the Children, who shows him the three forms of the Motherland: the Mother-as-she-was, Jagaddhātṛī; the Mother-as-she-is, the emaciated Kālī; and the Mother-as-she-will-be, Durgā, surrounded by her four children, Lakshmi, Sarasvatī, Kārtikeya, and Ganesha. The only way to replace Kālī with Durgā is for her Children to maintain their vows of self-discipline and to work to vanquish foreign invaders. In the final chapter of *Ānandamath* (present in the first edition and unchanged thereafter), after the *sannyāsīs* have routed both the Muslims and the British, a supernatural figure explains to their leader Satyananda that the British have been forced to rule in India so that Hinduism, or what is translated as below the Eternal Code (*sanātana dharma*), might regain its pristine power.

PART I, CHAPTER 10

The two walked silently across the plain in that moonlit night. Mahendra was silent, anguished, unbending, somewhat intrigued. Suddenly Bhabananda seemed to become a different person. No longer was he the grave, calm renouncer, the skilled, valiant figure of the battlefield, the man who had cut off the head of a commanding officer! No longer the man who had just rebuked Mahendra so haughtily. It was as if seeing the radiance of plain and forest, mountain and river of a peaceful, moonlit world had invigorated his mind in a special way, like the ocean gladdened by the rising moon. He was now light-hearted, talkative, friendly, keen to make a conversation. He tried often to get Mahendra to talk, but Mahendra remained silent. Then, with no other recourse, Bhabananda began to sing softly to himself:

I revere the Mother! The Mother
Rich in waters, rich in fruit,
Cooled by the southern airs,
Verdant with the harvest fair.

Mahendra was a little astonished when he heard this song, and was at a loss to understand. Who was this mother, “rich in waters, rich in fruit, cooled by the southern airs, verdant with the harvest fair”?

“Who is this mother?” he asked Bhabananda.

Without answering Bhabananda began to sing:

The Mother—with nights that thrill in the light of the moon,
Radiant with foliage and flowers in bloom,
Smiling sweetly, speaking gently,
Giving joy and gifts in plenty.

Mahendra cried, “But that’s our land, not a mother!”

Bhabananda replied, “We recognize no other mother. ‘One’s mother and birthland are greater than heaven itself.’ But we say that our birthland is our mother. We’ve no mothers, fathers, brothers, friends, no wives, children, houses, or homes. All we have is she who is rich in waters, rich in fruit, cooled with the southern airs, verdant with the harvest fair.”

“Then sing on,” said Mahendra, understanding at last.

And Bhabananda sang once more:

I revere the Mother! The Mother
Rich in waters, rich in fruit . . .
Giving joy and gifts in plenty.
Powerless? How so, Mother?

With the strength of voices fell,
 Seventy millions in their swell!
 And with sharpened swords
 By twice as many hands upheld!
 To the Mother I bow low,
 To her who wields so great a force,
 To her who saves,
 And drives away the hostile hordes!
 You our wisdom, you our law,
 You our heart, you our core,
 In our bodies the living force is thine!
 Mother, you're our strength of arm,
 And in our hearts the loving balm,
 Yours the form we shape in every shrine!
 For you are Durga, bearer of the tenfold power,
 And wealth's Goddess, dallying on the lotusflower,
 You are Speech, to you I bow,
 To us wisdom you endow.
 I bow to the Goddess Fair
 Rich in waters, rich in fruit,
 To the Mother
 Spotless—and beyond compare!
 I revere the Mother! the Mother
 Darkly green and also true,
 Richly dressed, of joyous face,
 This ever-plenteous land of grace.

Mahendra saw that the bandit wept as he sang. "Who are you people?" he asked bewildered.

Bhabananda replied, "We are the Children."

"What does that mean? Whose children?" asked Mahendra.

"The Mother's Children."

Mahendra said, "Fine, do children honour their mother by robbing and plundering? What kind of mother-love is this?"

Bhabananda replied, "We don't rob and plunder."

"But you just plundered those carts!"

"Was that robbery and plunder? Whose money did we plunder?"

"The king's, of course!"

"The king's!" said Bhabananda. "Does he have a right to the money he takes?"

"It is the king's share."

"A king who doesn't look after this kingdom is no king," said Bhabananda.

"I can see sepoy's blowing you all to bits some day at the cannon's mouth!"

“Don’t worry, I’ve seen plenty of those scoundrels about, I saw some today too!”

“You didn’t see well enough. One day you’ll really see,” said Mahendra.

“Perhaps,” said Bhabananda. “You can only die once.”

“Yes, but why court death?”

Bhabananda answered, “Mahendra Simha, I thought you might be a real man, but I see now that you’re like the rest of them—a devourer only of fine things. Look, the snake crawls about flat on the ground, the lowliest creature around, but step on it and even the snake rears its hood! Aren’t you even a little fed up with the way things are? Look at all the other places—Magadha, Mithila, Kashi, Kanci, Delhi, Kashmir—where else is in such a mess? Where else do people have to eat grass for lack of food? Or thorns, or anthills, or creepers from the forest? Where else do they eat dogs and jackals and dead bodies? Where else can’t folk have peace of mind even when they’ve locked away their money, or installed the *shalogam*² at home, or kept their wife and daughter indoors, or when their womenfolk are expecting? Here they cut open the womb and tear out the child! Everywhere else there’s a pact with the king for protection, but does our Muslim king protect us? We’ve lost our religious way of life, our caste status, our self-respect, our family connections—and now we’re about to lose our lives! If we don’t get rid of those bearded degenerates will anything be left of our Hindu identity?”

Mahendra said, “How will you get rid of them?”

“By destroying them,” Bhabananda replied.

“On your own? Just with a slap?”

The bandit sang:

Powerless? How so, Mother?
With the strength of voices fell,
Seventy millions in their swell!
And with sharpened swords
By twice as many hands upheld!

Mahendra said, “But I see that you’re alone!”

“How can you say that? You’ve just seen two hundred men!”

“Are they all Children too?”

“Every one of them.”

“How many more are there?”

“Thousands right now, and in time there’ll be more.”

Mahendra said, “Let’s say there’ll be ten to twenty thousand of you. Will you be able to end Muslim rule with that?”

“How many men did the English have at Plassey?” rejoined Bhabananda.

“You’re comparing the Bengalis to the English?”

“Why not?” answered Bhabananda. “There’s a limit to physical strength. Do you think a stronger person can make a bullet fly farther?”

“The why is there such a difference between the English and the Muslims?” asked Mahendra.

“Listen,” said Bhabananda, “an Englishman won’t flee even to save his life, whereas the Muslim will run off when he begins to sweat; he’ll slope off in search of a cool drink! Again, the English hang on, they’ll finish what they’ve begun. But the Muslims play fast and loose. The sepoy risk their lives for money, even then they don’t get paid. And finally, it’s a question of courage. . . . When they see a single cannonball a whole tribe of Muslims will flee, whereas a tribe of cannonballs can’t make a single Englishman run!”

“Do your people have all these fine qualities?” asked Mahendra.

“No,” said Bhabananda. “But qualities don’t fall off trees; you’ve got to practice them.”

“And are you doing that?”

“Can’t you see we’re renunciators?” said Bhabananda. “We’ve renounced in order to practice. When the job’s done, when our practice is completed, we’ll go back to running households. We too have wives and daughters.”

Mahendra said, “Have you been able to give all that up? To cut off worldly concerns?”

Bhabananda answered, “No *santan* should lie, so I won’t make empty boasts. Who can cut off worldly concerns? Those who say they’ve done so either have never had such concerns or are making an empty boast. We don’t cut off worldly concerns, we keep a vow. Will you be a *santan*?”

Mahendra replied, “Unless I hear about my wife and child, I can’t answer that.”

“Very well, then come and meet your wife and daughter.”

They continued on their way, and Bhabananda began to sing *Bande Mataram* again. Mahendra, who had a good voice and some knowledge and love of music, sang with him. As he sang, he noticed that tears came to his eyes.

Mahendra said, “So long as I don’t have to leave my wife and child, you can initiate me into this vow.”

Bhabananda said, “Whoever takes this vow must abandon wife and child. If you take the vow you can’t see your wife and daughter. They’ll be looked after properly, but you’re forbidden to see them till your vow is fulfilled.”

“Then I won’t take the vow,” said Mahendra.

PART I, CHAPTER 11

Night had turned to dawn, and that deserted forest, dark and silent for so long, was now flooded with light and rejoiced in the sound of bird-song. And in that joyful dawn, in the joyous forest, in the monastery of the sacred brotherhood, Satyananda Thakur sat on a deer-skin performing his early morning worship with Jibananda at his side. Just then Bhabananda arrived with Mahendra. The

monk continued his rituals . . . and no one dared to speak. When the worship was done, both Bhabananda and Jibananda made their obeisance, and taking the dust from his feet sat down respectfully in his presence.

Satyananda made a sign to Bhabananda and took him outside. We do not know what they said, but after a while both reentered the shrine, and with a kindly smile the monk said to Mahendra, “My son, I have been greatly distressed by your sorrow. It was only by the mercy of the Friend of the needy that I was able to save your wife and daughter last night.” He explained how he had been able to rescue Kalyani. Then he said, “Come, let me take you to them.”

The monk led Mahendra into the temple and Mahendra saw that they had entered a hall of vast proportions. Even then, in the crimson flash of a new dawn, when the nearby forest glittered like diamonds in the sunlight, that huge hall was almost dark. At first Mahendra was unable to see what was inside, but as he peered more and more closely, he could gradually make out a massive four-armed statue bearing a conch shell, discus, mace and lotus, respectively, in each hand, with the Kaustubha gem adorning its breast, and the discus Sudarshan seeming to whirl around in front. Two great, headless forms, painted as if bathed in blood, representing the demons Madhu and Kaitabha, stood in the front of the image. On its left stood a terrified-looking Lakshmi, flowing hair disheveled, and adorned with a garland of flowers. On the right stood Sarasvati, surrounded by books, musical instruments, the various musical modes personified, and other objects. On Vishnu’s lap sat an enchanting image, more beautiful and glorious than Lakshmi and Sarasvati. Gandharas, kinnaras, gods, yakshas and sprites paid her homage.

In a voice most solemn and filled with awe, the monk asked Mahendra, “Can you see everything?”

“Yes,” said Mahendra.

“Have you seen the figure in Vishnu’s lap?”

“Yes, Who is she?”

“The Mother.”

“Who is this Mother?” asked Mahendra.

The monk answered, “She whose Children we are.”

“Who is she?”

“You will know her in time,” was the answer. “Now say *Bande Mataram* and follow me. There is more to see.”

Then the monk took Mahendra into another chamber. There he saw a beautiful image of the Goddess as Bearer of the earth, perfectly formed and decorated . . .

“Who is she?” asked Mahendra.

“The Mother-as-she-was,” replied the monk.

“Who is that?” asked Mahendra.

“She who subdued the wild beasts such as the elephant and lion underfoot and set up her lotus throne in their dwelling place. She was happy and beautiful,

adorned with every ornament, radiant as the risen sun. . . . Prostrate yourself before her.”

After Mahendra had devoutly prostrated himself before the motherland in the form of the nurturing Goddess, the monk pointed to a dark tunnel and said, “Follow me.” He went on ahead, Mahendra following apprehensively close behind. They reached a dark chamber, in the depths of the earth, lit somehow by a faint light. There in the dim light he could see an image of Kali.

The monk said, “Look, this is the Mother-as-she-is.”

“Kali!” said Mahendra fearfully.

“Yes, Kali,” said the monk. “Blackened and shrouded in darkness. She has been robbed of everything; that is why she is naked. And because the whole land is a burning-ground, she is garlanded with skulls. And she’s crushing her own gracious Lord underfoot. Alas, dear Mother!”

The tears streamed down the monk’s face. Mahendra asked, “Why has she a club and begging bowl in her hands?”

“We’re her Children, and that’s all we could put in her hands as weapons,” said the monk. “Now, say *Bande Mataram*.”

“*Bande Mataram*,” said Mahendra and prostrated himself before Kali.

Then saying, “Come this way,” the monk began to ascend a second tunnel. Suddenly the rays of the morning sun dazzled their eyes and they heard the soft bird-song all around them. Mahendra saw a golden ten-armed image of the Goddess in a large marble shrine glistening and smiling in the early morning rays.

Prostrating himself, the monk said, “And this is the Mother-as-she-will-be. Her ten arms reach out in ten directions, adorned with various powers in the form of the different weapons she holds, the enemy is crushed at her feet, while the mighty lion who has taken refuge there is engaged in destroying the foe. Behold her whose arms are the directions”—here Satyananda’s voice broke down and he began to weep—“whose arms are the directions, who holds various weapons and crushes the enemy and roams on the lordly lion’s back, who has Lakshmi personifying good fortune on her right, and the goddess of speech who bestows wisdom and learning on her left, with Kartikeya signifying strength and Ganesh good success, in attendance! Come, let us prostrate ourselves before the Mother.”

With folded hands and upturned faces both cried out in unison: “You who are blessed above all good things, the gracious one, who brings all good things to fruition, our refuge—Tryambaka, Gauri, Narayani—salutations to you.”

After they had devoutly prostrated themselves they rose up and Mahendra asked in a choked voice, “When will we be able to see the Mother in this form?”

The monk replied, “When all Mother’s children recognize her as the Mother, she will be gracious to us.”

Mahendra asked abruptly, “Where are my wife and daughter?”

“Come, it is time to see them,” answered the monk.

“I’ll see them just once and then send them away.”

“Why will you send them away?”

“Because I want to accept the *Maha Mantra*.”

PART IV, CHAPTER 8

“Let us go,” said Satyananda. “I am ready. But, oh! Great One, resolve a doubt for me. Why is it that just when I’ve won the battle and freed the Eternal Code from all obstacles, I’ve received this command of dismissal?”

The other replied, “Your work’s been done, and Muslim rule has been destroyed. There’s no more for you to do. There’s no need for the pointless killing of living beings.”

“Muslim rule has been destroyed,” said Satyananda, “but Hindu rule has not been established. Even now the English remain powerful in Kolkata.”

The other said, “Hindu rule will not be established at this time. If you remain, people will die needlessly. So, come away.”

When he heard this, a sharp pang of anguish pierced Satyananda. “Master,” he said, “if Hindu rule will not be established then who will be king? Will the Muslims rule again?”

“No,” replied the other. “Now the English will rule.”

Satyananda’s eyes streamed with tears. Turning to the image of his birthland in the form of the Mother mounted on high, he joined his hands together and said in a voice choked with tears, “Oh Mother! I’ve not been able to set you free. Once more you will fall into the hands of unworthy foreigners. Do not be offended with your Child. Alas, Mother! Why did I not die on the battlefield today?”

The Healer said, “Satyananda, do not grieve. It was mistakenly, by means of banditry, that you gathered wealth and won your victory. Wrongdoing can never produce holy fruit. So you will not be able to free the land. What will happen will happen for the good. Unless the English rule, it will not be possible for the Eternal Code to be reinstated. Listen carefully, I’ll explain it to you according to the mind of the Great Ones.

“To worship three hundred and thirty million gods is not the Eternal Code. That’s a worldly, inferior code. Through its influence the real Eternal Code—what the foreigners call the Hindu rule of life—has been lost. The true Hindu rule of life is based on knowledge, not on action. And this knowledge is of two kinds—outward and inward. The inward knowledge is the chief part of the Eternal Code, but unless the outward knowledge arises first, the inward cannot arise. Unless one knows the gross, one cannot know the subtle.

“For a long time now the outward knowledge has been lost in this land, and so the true Eternal Code has been lost too. If one wishes to reinstate this Code, one must make known the outward knowledge first. . . . The English are very knowledgeable in the outward knowledge, and they’re very good at instructing

people. Therefore we'll make them king. And when by this teaching our people are well instructed about external things, they'll be ready to understand the inner. Then no longer will there be any obstacles to spreading the Eternal Code, and the true Code will shine forth by itself again. And till that day comes—so long as the Hindu is not wise and virtuous and strong once more—English rule will remain intact. Their subjects will be happy under the English, and they will be free to follow their religion. Therefore wise one, refrain from fighting the English, and follow me.”

Satyananda said, “O Great One! If English rule was your aim, and if it is good for the land to be under English rule at this time, then why did you engage us in this cruel war?”

The Great Man replied, “At present the English are traders. They're intent on amassing wealth and do not wish to take on the burden of ruling a kingdom. But because of the Children's rebellion, they'll be forced to take on the burden of ruling, for without this they cannot collect wealth. The rebellion came about to usher in English rule. Now come—as you acquire knowledge you yourself will be able to understand everything.”

[From Chatterji, *Ānandamath*; or, *The Sacred Brotherhood*, trans. Julius J. Lipner (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 144–151 and 228–230.]

BAL GANGADHAR TILAK: “FATHER OF INDIAN UNREST”

Impressed as he was by his grandfather's recollections of the days before British rule reached Maharashtra, and of the Rebellion of 1857, it is not surprising that Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856–1920) should have grown up questioning the right of the British to govern his land. Like Ranade and Gokhale (with whom he fought a running political duel for many years), Tilak was descended from the Chitpavan Brahman caste, but unlike them he maintained an uncompromising hostility to foreign domination.

In addition to the Maratha history he imbibed at his grandfather's knee, Tilak learned Sanskrit and English from his father, a teacher and deputy inspector of schools in a small town on India's western seacoast. When he was ten, the family moved to Poona, but at sixteen Tilak lost his father. A self-reliant but weak-bodied youth, he devoted a year to building up his physique with exercises. After receiving his BA, he took a Bachelor of Laws degree but refused to enter government service, the usual haven of educated Indians in those days. Instead, with a few like-minded friends he started a school and two newspapers, in order to spread Western knowledge among the people of their native region of Maharashtra. Tilak helped to found the Deccan Education Society and Fergusson College; but, since he opposed the reform program of Agarkar and Gokhale,³ he resigned from the group in 1890.

Tilak now purchased from the group the Marathi weekly *Kesari* (Lion), which he had named and helped to edit, and its English counterpart, *The Mahratta*. Hence-

forth he poured his energies into educating the people of his province through the columns of these newspapers. His Marathi style was particularly effective and made a direct appeal to villagers, who would gather to have it read to them. Tilak also promoted in his papers the celebration of two new annual festivals—one dedicated to the Hindu god Ganesha, and the other honoring the Maratha hero Shivaji. His purpose in organizing these festivals was to develop in the Maharashtrian people a sense of pride in their common history and religion; however, the Muslim community could not help but notice that one of them often appeared to coincide with their festival of Muharram, and the other extolled the Mughal Empire's fiercest enemy. As eaters of beef, Muslims were further alarmed at the anti-cowkilling agitation which had been started by Dayanand, and which Tilak continued.

Tilak's success in arousing popular enthusiasm through these activities began to worry the government. After the assassination in 1897 of two British officials in Poona, Tilak was accused of fanning hatred for the officials with his *Kesari* articles, and was sentenced to jail for eighteen months. Imprisonment only whetted his fighting spirit, and the Bengal agitation of 1905 found him in the front lines of the fray. "Militancy—not mendicancy" was the slogan the Extremist faction used to disparage the Moderates, and Tilak's cry of "Freedom is my birthright and I will have it" swept the country. When the Extremists failed to wrest control of the Congress from the Moderates at the 1907 session, Tilak defied the chairman (who had refused to recognize him), whereupon the meeting degenerated into a riot in which shoes and chairs flew through the air.

Shortly afterward Tilak was again arrested and tried for encouraging political assassination in his speeches and writings. He was sentenced to six years' rigorous confinement in Mandalay, Upper Burma. Books helped him to pass the time, and he returned to his Sanskrit studies. Earlier he had written two books arguing that the Vedas were over six thousand years old. His magnum opus, written in prison, was his lengthy commentary on the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

Tilak's interpretation of the *Gītā*, emphasizing as it does the importance of action in this world, gives us the key to his own character and to the influence he has had on political thought in modern India. He argued that Hinduism's most popular sacred poem, the *Gītā*, preached political as well as religious activity; he hinted that violence in a righteous cause was morally justifiable. His followers cut themselves loose from the known and peaceful political standards to which the Moderates remained attached, and drifted into the uncharted depths of revolutionary violence and terrorism. Tilak himself never used such methods, but when others used them he maintained a silence that implied assent. The "father of Indian unrest," as the British journalist Valentine Chirol called him, was not the man to reprimand his own offspring.

In 1916 Tilak rejoined the Congress and, as their most popular leader, insisted on the compromises that made possible the united demand for self-government agreed to at Lucknow by the Congress and the Muslim League. By the time of his death in 1920 he had tempered his opposition to British rule sufficiently to favor contesting the elections provided for under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919—in contrast to the younger Gandhi, who wished to boycott them. But Tilak's example of

fearless defiance was remembered by those who came after him, and the title of Lokamanya (“Honored by the People”) is still used as a reminder of his efforts to transform the nationalist cause from a limited upper-class one into a truly popular movement.

THE GĪTĀ VERSUS THE PENAL CODE

In a speech at the 1897 festival honoring the eighteenth-century warrior-king Shivaji, Tilak boldly declared that the *Bhagavad Gītā* sanctioned the killing of enemies for unselfish and benevolent reasons. (Shivaji had enticed his Muslim opponent Afzal Khan into a private conference, and in a struggle had murdered him with a concealed weapon.) One week after this and other speeches appeared in the *Kesari*, a young Brahman killed a British official who had offended public opinion. Tilak himself was soon tried, sentenced, and jailed for encouraging sedition against the government. A half-century later, Gandhi’s assassin used at his trial a similar interpretation of the *Gītā*.

It is needless to make fresh historical researches in connection with the killing of Afzal Khan. Let us even assume that Shivaji first planned and then executed the murder of Afzal Khan. Was this act of the Maharaja [Shivaji] good or bad? This question which has to be considered should not be viewed from the standpoint of the Penal Code or even the Smritis [law books] of Manu or Yajñavalkya, or even the principles of morality laid down in the Western and Eastern ethical systems. The laws which bind society are for common men like yourselves and myself. No one seeks to trace the genealogy of a Rishi [a legendary sage], nor to fasten guilt upon a king. Great men are above the common principles of morality. These principles fail in their scope to reach the pedestal of great men. Did Shivaji commit a sin in killing Afzal Khan? The answer to this question can be found in the Mahabharata itself. Shrimat Krishna’s teaching in the Bhagavad Gita is to kill even our teachers and our kinsmen. No blame attaches to any person if he is doing deeds without being motivated by a desire to reap the fruit of his deeds. Shri Shivaji Maharaja did nothing with a view to fill the small void of his own stomach [from selfish motives]. With benevolent intentions he murdered Afzal Khan for the good of others. If thieves enter our house and we have not sufficient strength in our wrists to drive them out, we should shut them up and burn them alive. God has not conferred upon the *Mlecchas* [barbarians, foreigners] the grant inscribed on a copperplate⁴ of the kingdom of Hindustan. The Maharaja strove to drive them away from the land of his birth; he did not thereby commit the sin of coveting what belonged to others. Do not circumscribe your vision like a frog in a well. Get out of the Penal Code, enter into the extremely high atmosphere of the Bhagavad Gita, and then consider the actions of great men.

[From *The Political Awakening in India*, ed. John R. McLane
(Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 56.]

THE TENETS OF THE NEW PARTY

At the end of the Congress session of 1906, it was clear that the gap between the Moderates and the Extremists had been bridged only temporarily by the mediation of Dadabhai Naoroji. At this juncture, on January 2, 1907, in Calcutta, Tilak delivered an address summarizing the aims and methods of the new party of which he was the leader.

Two new words have recently come into existence with regard to our politics, and they are Moderates and Extremists. These words have a specific relation to time, and they, therefore, will change with time. The Extremists of today will be Moderates tomorrow, just as the Moderates of today were Extremists yesterday. When the National Congress was first started and Mr. Dadabhai's views, which now go for Moderate, were given to the public, he was styled an Extremist, so that you will see that the term Extremist is an expression of progress. We are Extremists today and our sons will call themselves Extremists and us Moderates. Every new party begins as Extremists and ends as Moderates. The sphere of practical politics is not unlimited. We cannot say what will or will not happen 1,000 years hence—perhaps during that long period, the whole of the white race will be swept away in another glacial period. We must, therefore, study the present and work out a program to meet the present condition.

It is impossible to go into details within the time at my disposal. One thing is granted, namely, that this government does not suit us. As has been said by an eminent statesman—the government of one country by another can never be a successful, and therefore a permanent government. There is no difference of opinion about this fundamental proposition between the old and new schools. One fact is that this alien government has ruined the country. In the beginning, all of us were taken by surprise. We were almost dazed. We thought that everything that the rulers did was for our good and that this English government has descended from the clouds to save us from the invasions of Tamerlane and Chingis Khan, and, as they say, not only from foreign invasions but from internecine warfare, or the internal or external invasions, as they call it. We felt happy for a time, but it soon came to light that the peace which was established in this country did this, as Mr. Dadabhai has said in one place—that we were prevented from going at each other's throats, so that a foreigner might go at the throat of us all. Pax Britannica has been established in this country in order that a foreign government may exploit the country. That this is the effect of this Pax Britannica is being gradually realized in these days. It was an unhappy circumstance that it was not realised sooner. We believed in the benevolent intentions of the government, but in politics there is no benevolence. Benevolence is used to sugar-coat the declarations of self-interest and we were in those days deceived by the apparent benevolent intentions under which rampant self-interest was concealed. That was our state then. But soon a change came over us. English

education, growing poverty, and better familiarity with our rulers, opened our eyes and our leaders; especially, the venerable leader [Dadabhai Naoroji] who presided over the recent Congress was the first to tell us that the drain from the country was ruining it, and if the drain was to continue, there was some great disaster awaiting us. So terribly convinced was he of this that he went over from here to England and spent twenty-five years of his life in trying to convince the English people of the injustice that is being done to us. He worked very hard. He had conversations and interviews with secretaries of state, with members of Parliament—and with what result?

He has come here at the age of eighty-two to tell us that he is bitterly disappointed. Mr. Gokhale, I know, is not disappointed. He is a friend of mine and I believe that this is his honest conviction. Mr. Gokhale is not disappointed, but is ready to wait another eighty years till he is disappointed like Mr. Dadabhai. . . .

You can now understand the difference between the old and the new parties. Appeals to the bureaucracy are hopeless. On this point both the new and old parties are agreed. The old party believes in appealing to the British nation and we do not. That being our position, it logically follows we must have some other method. There is another alternative. We are not going to sit down quietly. We shall have some other method by which to achieve what we want. We are not disappointed, we are not pessimists. It is the hope of achieving the goal by our own efforts that has brought into existence this new party.

There is no empire lost by a free grant of concession by the rulers to the ruled. History does not record any such event. Empires are lost by luxury, by being too much bureaucratic or overconfident or from other reasons. But an empire has never come to an end by the rulers conceding power to the ruled. . . .

We have come forward with a scheme which if you accept [it], shall better enable you to remedy this state of things than the scheme of the old school. Your industries are ruined utterly, ruined by foreign rule; your wealth is going out of the country and you are reduced to the lowest level which no human being can occupy. In this state of things, is there any other remedy by which you can help yourself? The remedy is not petitioning but boycott. We say prepare your forces, organize your power, and then go to work so that they cannot refuse you what you demand. A story in Mahabharata tells that Sri Krishna was sent to effect a compromise, but the Pandavas and Kauravas were both organizing their forces to meet the contingency of failure of the compromise. This is politics. Are you prepared in this way to fight if your demand is refused? If you are, be sure you will not be refused; but if you are not, nothing can be more certain than that your demand will be refused, and perhaps, forever. We are not armed, and there is no necessity for arms either. We have a stronger weapon, a political weapon, in boycott. We have perceived one fact, that the whole of this administration, which is carried on by a handful of Englishmen, is carried on with our assistance. We are all in subordinate service. This whole government is carried on with our assistance and they try to keep us in ignorance of our power of co-

operation between ourselves by which that which is in our own hands at present can be claimed by us and administered by us. The point is to have the entire control in our hands. I want to have the key of my house, and not merely one stranger turned out of it. Self-government is our goal; we want a control over our administrative machinery. We don't want to become clerks and remain [clerks]. At present, we are clerks and willing instruments of our own oppression in the hands of an alien government, and that government is ruling over us not by its innate strength but by keeping us in ignorance and blindness to the perception of this fact. Professor Seeley⁵ shares this view. Every Englishman knows that they are a mere handful in this country and it is the business of every one of them to befool you in believing that you are weak and they are strong. This is politics. We have been deceived by such policy so long. What the new party wants you to do is to realize the fact that your future rests entirely in your own hands. If you mean to be free, you can be free; if you do not mean to be free, you will fall and be for ever fallen. So many of you need not like arms; but if you have not the power of active resistance, have you not the power of self-denial and self-abstinence in such a way as not to assist this foreign government to rule over you? This is boycott and this is what is meant when we say, boycott is a political weapon. We shall not give them assistance to collect revenue and keep peace. We shall not assist them in fighting beyond the frontiers or outside India with Indian blood and money. We shall not assist them in carrying on the administration of justice. We shall have our own courts, and when [the] time comes we shall not pay taxes. Can you do that by your united efforts? If you can, you are free from tomorrow. Some gentlemen who spoke this evening referred to half bread as against the whole bread. I say I want the whole bread and that immediately. But if I can not get the whole, don't think I have no patience.

I will take the half they give me and then try for the remainder. This is the line of thought and action in which you must train yourself. We have not raised this cry from a mere impulse. It is a reasoned impulse. Try to understand that reason and try to strengthen that impulse by your logical convictions. I do not ask you to blindly follow us. Think over the whole problem for yourselves. If you accept our advice, we feel sure we can achieve our salvation thereby. This is the advice of the new party. Perhaps we have not obtained a full recognition of our principles. Old prejudices die very hard. Neither of us [Moderates or Extremists] wanted to wreck the Congress, so we compromised, and were satisfied that our principles were recognized, and only to a certain extent. That does not mean that we have accepted the whole situation. We may have a step in advance next year, so that within a few years our principles will be recognized, and recognized to such an extent that the generations who come after us may consider us Moderates. This is the way in which a nation progresses, and this is the lesson you have to learn from the struggle now going on. This is a lesson of progress, a lesson of helping yourself as much as possible, and if you really perceive the force of it, if you are convinced by these arguments, then and then

only is it possible for you to effect your salvation from the alien rule under which you labor at this moment.

[From *Tilak: His Writings and Speeches*,
3rd ed. (Madras: Ganesh, 1922), 55–57, 61, 63–67.]

AGITATION AGAINST THE BENGAL PARTITION AND FOR SWADESHI: THE POSITION OF SURENDRANATH BANERJEA

One significant development in the period from the later nineteenth century up to the First World War was the mass movement against the partition of Bengal that had been conceived by the Viceroy Lord Curzon and his bureaucracy, and approved by the secretary of state for India and the British government in 1905. When the plan for the division of the large Bengal Presidency was announced, even some Englishmen in Calcutta opposed it, though they later sided with their official countrymen. One account by an important participant, Surendranath Banerjea (see introduction to him in chapter 4), was careful and measured, since he was of the Moderate persuasion in politics and always advocated constitutional means. Surendranath Banerjea links the earlier period of Moderate petitioning with the somewhat later (but overlapping) more radical period of mass agitation. He joined in the mass movements, but opposed the use of violence by a small number of politicized Indians that began in the late nineteenth century and continued sporadically through the following decades. This use of violence was also opposed by Gandhi and many other Congress leaders.

SWADESHI IN THE AIR

The selections below from Banerjea's memoirs concisely and vividly depict the growing agitation against partition, and then for boycott and swadeshi, from 1905 onward.

Lord Curzon was now at the head of affairs. His energy was feverish. He was upsetting and unsettling things. The question of boundaries attracted his attention. The map of India was to be recast, but by pacific methods and with the impress of his genius and superior personality stamped thereon. . . .

It was in the course of this tour that the scheme of Partition underwent a further expansion. It was now proposed, and for the first time, to include the whole of North Bengal and the districts of Faridpore and Barisal in East Bengal, in the new and expanded project.

The revised scheme was conceived in secret, discussed in secret, and settled in secret, without the slightest hint to the public. The idea of submitting it to a representative conference was no longer followed. "The final scheme" said Lord Morley from his place in Parliament, "was never submitted to the judgment of anybody in Bengal." . . .

On July 20, 1905, the announcement was made that Bengal was to be partitioned, and the public were informed of the details of the Partition. For the first time they learnt that North Bengal with all its historic associations was to be separated from the old province. The announcement fell like a bomb-shell upon an astonished public. But in our bewilderment we did not lose our heads. We made up our minds to do all that lay in our power, with the aid of the constitutional means at our disposal, to reverse, or at any rate to obtain a modification of, the Partition.

We felt that we had been insulted, humiliated, and tricked. We felt that the whole of our future was at stake, and that it was a deliberate blow aimed at the growing solidarity and self-consciousness of the Bengalee-speaking population. Originally intended to meet administrative requirements, we felt that it had drawn to itself a political flavour and complexion, and, if allowed to be passed, it would be fatal to our political progress and to that close union between Hindus and Mohamedans upon which the prospects of the Indian advancement so largely depended. For it was openly and officially given out that Eastern Bengal and Assam was to be a Mohamedan province, and that creedal distinctions were to be recognized as the basis of the new policy to be adopted in the new province. . . .

To have divided Bengal into two provinces, keeping the Bengalee-speaking population together in one province, and the rest in the other, would have removed all administrative inconveniences, whatever they were, and gratified public opinion. But this would not suit Lord Curzon and his Government. For, as we believed, there was an underlying political motive, which would not be satisfied with such a division of the province as was suggested. . . .

The whole community felt a concern about a matter affecting their province such as they had never experienced before. The community was writhing under a sense of surprise and indignation, accentuated by the farce of a conference at “Belvedere,”⁶ with its seeming deference to public opinion. It was in this state of the public mind that the idea of a boycott of British goods was publicly started—by whom I cannot say—by several, I think, at one and the same time. It first found expression at a public meeting in the district of Pabna, and it was repeated at public meetings held in other mofussil⁷ towns; and the successful boycott of American goods by the Chinese was proclaimed throughout Asia and reproduced in the Indian newspapers.

The feeling was further emphasized by the stirrings of an industrial movement that was beginning to fasten its hold on the public mind. The *Swadeshi* movement had already come into existence. At any rate the *Swadeshi* spirit was abroad. It was in the air. There was a growing party among the educated community who espoused it. Our industrial helplessness was attracting attention in an increasing measure; and it was readily perceived that the boycott would be a double-edged weapon, industrial and political, in its scope and character. . . .

It will thus be seen that the boycott was a temporary measure adopted for a particular object, and was to be given up as soon as that object was attained. Its only aim and purpose was to call the attention of the British public to Bengal's great grievance, and when the Partition was modified and the grievance was removed, the boycott was to cease. That pledge was redeemed.

That the boycott sometimes led to excesses no one will dispute; but all constitutional movements suffer from this inherent weakness, which springs from the defects of our common human nature. All causes—the purest and the noblest—will have their moderates and their extremists. But the excesses, more or less incidental to all constitutional movements, have never been held as an argument against the adoption of constitutional methods for the redress of public grievances. . . .

A boycott movement in India had never before been thought of or attempted. It was a bold conception; and the first impulse of all spectators, as in the case of the *Statesman*, was to treat it with ridicule. But the success that it soon attained disclosed the volume of public sentiment that was behind it. Without a more or less universal feeling supporting it, the boycott was bound to fail. Its success was a revelation to all; it outstripped the anticipations of its inaugurators. But the bureaucracy in those days would learn nothing that was not in its files and was not consecrated by the dust of the Secretariat shelves. It was amazed at the ebullition of public feeling—it was indignant—it lost all self-control; it sought to repress where tactful handling and conciliatory measures would have been more effective, and it thus added to the intensity of the flame.

The course of events during the whole of the controversy in connexion with the Partition of Bengal bears out what I have just observed. There was throughout a persistent attempt to suppress the expression of public feeling in the name of law and order; and, as always happens in such cases, the attempt at repression recoiled upon its authors. More repressive measures were requisitioned; and the more signally did they fail; and the public excitement and unrest grew apace.

Undoubtedly the student community were deeply moved, and in the exuberance of their zeal they were sometimes betrayed into excesses. When a great impulse stirs the heart of a community it is the young and impressionable who feel the full impact of the rising tide. . . .

Their enthusiasm was roused to a pitch such as I had never before witnessed. It was positively dangerous for a schoolboy or a college student to appear in a class or lecture room in clothes made of a foreign stuff. The students would not submit to exercise books being circulated for their class examinations with paper that had been manufactured abroad. I remember a schoolboy appearing in the fourth form of the Ripon Collegiate School with a shirt made of foreign cloth. As soon as the discovery was made, the shirt was torn off his back, and he narrowly escaped lynching. Let me here relate one more incident of a similar character. At an examination of the Ripon College students, the college authorities supplied foreign-manufactured paper upon which the answers were to be

written. The students in a body refused to touch the blank books that were supplied. So strong was the feeling that it was thought not safe to ignore it. Country-made paper had to be substituted, and the examination then proceeded in the usual way.

It was the fervour of the students that communicated itself to the whole community and inspired it with an impulse, the like of which had never been felt before. It was a strange upheaval of public feeling. The *Swadeshi* movement invaded our homes and captured the hearts of our women-folk, who were even more enthusiastic than the men. A grand-daughter of mine, then only five years old, returned a pair of shoes that had been sent to her by a relative, because they were of foreign make. The air was surcharged with the *Swadeshi* spirit, and it is no exaggeration to say that our young men were the creators of this stupendous moral change.

I have not witnessed a revolution in my time, nor by an effort of the imagination can I conceive what it is like. But, amid the upheaval of the *Swadeshi* movement, I could, I think, obtain some idea of the transformation of public feeling and of the wild excitement which must precede a revolutionary movement. A strange atmosphere is created. Young and old, rich and poor, literate and illiterate, all breathe it, and all are swayed and moved and even transported by the invisible influence that is felt. Reason halts; judgment is held in suspense; it is one mighty impulse that moves the heart of the community and carries everything before it. An eminent doctor told me that in the height of the *Swadeshi* movement a girl-patient of his, not more than six years old, cried out in her delirium that she would not take any foreign medicine.

[From Sir Surendranath Banerjea, *A Nation in Making: Being the Reminiscences of Fifty Years of Public Life* (1925; Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1963), 171–174, 176, 178, 181–183.]

AUROBINDO GHOSE: MYSTIC PATRIOT

The agitation against the partition of Bengal drew into public life one of the most fascinating figures modern India has produced—a Westernized intellectual who became an ardent nationalist and ended his days an accomplished yogi. Aurobindo Ghose (1872–1950)—or Sri Aurobindo, as he is known to his followers—spent only four years in active politics, but in that brief span his passionate devotion to the national cause won him renown as an Extremist leader second only to Tilak in nationwide popularity.

Aurobindo's father, an England-educated Bengali doctor, was so determined to give his son a completely European education that he sent him to a convent school at five, and to England at seven; he studied in England until the age of twenty. Leaving Cambridge University, he returned to India in 1893 to enter the civil service of the progressive princely state of Baroda. Feeling himself “denationalized” by his foreign education, he turned his attention to Indian culture and politics. He was inspired by the example of Ramakrishna, the writings of Vivekananda, and the novels of Bankim

Chandra Chatterji; moreover, after studying Sanskrit, he was able to appreciate in the original the Upanishads and the Gītā, and he began to meditate.

His fascination with Hindu culture, when combined with the sense of patriotism he had imbibed along with the rest of his English education, led Aurobindo to sympathize with the Extremist politicians. Despite the fact that he was unusually shy, during the agitation against the partition of Bengal he gave up his post as vice principal of Baroda College and threw himself into the maelstrom of Bengal politics. His articles in the English-language paper *Bande Mātaram* made him famous, especially after the government tried and failed to prove seditious their deftly phrased innuendos. In 1907 Aurobindo led a large Bengali delegation to the crucial Congress session at Tilak's request, and served as Lokamanya's right-hand man during the stormy days of the split between the Moderates and the Extremists.

Shortly afterward Aurobindo consulted a Hindu holy man, who advised him to empty his mind of all thought so as to be able to receive supra-mental inspiration. He followed this advice faithfully; then while in prison as a suspected member of a bombing plot, he heard the voice of Vivekananda guiding him in his practice of yoga, and saw all men as incarnations of God. After his release, Aurobindo gradually withdrew from political life. In 1910 he abandoned Bengal—and his wife—for the French settlement of Pondichéry, where he established an ashram and spent his remaining forty years doing spiritual exercises and writing. Efforts to bring him back to the political arena proved ineffectual, but he may have given advice about politics to visitors over the years. He was joined in 1914 by a French couple, Paul and Mira Richard. When Paul Richard left, Mira Richard, rechristened “The Mother,” stayed and ran the day-to-day affairs of the ashram for more than half a century.

Brief as was his political career, Aurobindo nevertheless defined the essence of religious nationalism, and outlined a program for political action. Because of his prolonged absence from India, Aurobindo came to idealize both his native land and its ancestral faith; the fervor of his faith in “India” helped his Hindu countrymen to transcend the many differences of caste, language, and custom that had hindered the development among them of allegiance to one nation.

Although free of the region-centered nationalism that limited the effectiveness of a Bengali like Bankim or a Maharashtrian like Tilak, Aurobindo failed (as they had) to perceive that the greater the zeal of the Hindu nationalists became, the more difficult it would be to assuage the fears of Indian Muslims regarding their future in an independent Hindu-dominated India. In his later, postpolitical years, however, Aurobindo envisioned the coming of a global spiritual consciousness, “a spiritual religion of humanity” that would enable all persons to live in freedom and inner unity, regardless of national or religious affiliations.

THE DOCTRINE OF PASSIVE RESISTANCE

This article first appeared in the daily *Bande Mātaram* in April 1907, under the general title of “New Thought.” Aurobindo outlined the doctrines of active and passive

resistance, and explained which was applicable when. Although Gandhi rejected his rationale for the use of violence, he drew upon Aurobindo's ideas in his own advocacy of non-violent resistance.

ONE. INTRODUCTION

In a series of articles, published in this paper soon after the Calcutta session of the Congress, we sought to indicate our view both of the ideal which the Congress had adopted, the ideal of Swaraj or Self-Government as it exists in the United Kingdom or the Colonies, and of the possible lines of policy by which that ideal might be attained. There are, we pointed out, only three possible policies: petitioning, an unprecedented way of attempting a nation's liberty, which cannot possibly succeed except under conditions which have not yet existed among human beings; self-development and self-help; and the old orthodox historical method of organised resistance to the existing form of Government. We acknowledge that the policy of self-development which the New Party had forced to the front, was itself a novel departure under the circumstances of modern India. Self-development of an independent nation is one thing; self-development from a state of servitude under an alien and despotic rule without the forcible or peaceful removal of that rule as an indispensable preliminary, is quite another. No national self-development is possible without the support of *rājaśakti*, organised political strength, commanding, and whenever necessary compelling general allegiance and obedience. . . .

The attempt at self-development by self-help is absolutely necessary for our national salvation, whether we can carry it peacefully to the end or not. In no other way can we get rid of the fatal dependence, passivity and helplessness in which a century of all-pervasive British control has confirmed us. . . . The National Congress . . . has admitted the new policy as an essential part of the national programme. Swadeshi and National Education have been recognised, and, in all probability, Arbitration will be given its proper prominence at the next session; Boycott has been admitted as permissible in principle to all parts of India though the recommendation to extend it in practice as an integral part of the national policy was not pressed. . . .

TWO. ITS OBJECT

Organised resistance to an existing form of government may be undertaken either for the vindication of national liberty, or in order to substitute one form of government for another, or to remove particular objectionable features in the existing system without any entire or radical alteration of the whole, or simply for the redress of particular grievances. Our political agitation in the nineteenth century was entirely confined to the smaller and narrower objects.

The redress of particular grievances and the reformation of particular objectionable features in a system of Government are sufficient objects for organised resistance only when the Government is indigenous and all classes have a recognised place in the political scheme of the State. . . . They are still less a sufficient object when the despotic oligarchy is alien by race and has not even a permanent home in the country, for in that case the Government cannot be relied on to look after the general interest of the country, as in nations ruled by indigenous despotism; on the contrary, they are bound to place the interests of their own country and their own race first and foremost. Organised resistance in subject nations which mean to live and not to die, can have no less an object than an entire and radical change of the system of Government; only by becoming responsible to the people and drawn from the people can the Government be turned into a protector instead of an oppressor. But if the subject nation desires not a provincial existence and a maimed development but the full, vigorous and noble realisation of its national existence, even a change in the system of Government will not be enough; it must aim not only at a national Government responsible to the people but a free national Government unhampered even in the least degree by foreign control.

It is not surprising that our politicians of the nineteenth century could not realise these elementary truths of modern politics. They had no national experience behind them of politics under modern conditions; they had no teachers except English books and English liberal “sympathisers” and “friends of India.” Schooled by British patrons, trained to the fixed idea of English superiority and Indian inferiority, their imaginations could not embrace the idea of national liberty, and perhaps they did not even desire it at heart, preferring the comfortable ease which at that time still seemed possible in a servitude under British protection, to the struggles and sacrifices of a hard and difficult independence. . . . They could not even conceive of a truly popular and democratic Government in India except as the slow result of the development of centuries. . . . They could not then understand that the experience of an independent nation is not valid to guide a subject nation, unless and until the subject nation throws off the yoke and itself becomes independent. . . . The instructive spectacle of Asiatic nations demanding and receiving constitutional and parliamentary government as the price of a few years’ struggle and civil turmoil, had not then been offered to the world. . . . Their whole political outlook was bounded by the lessons of English history, and in English history they found only two methods of politics,—the slow method of agitation and the swift decisive method of open struggle and revolt. Unaccustomed to independent political thinking, they did not notice the significant fact that the method of agitation only became effective in England when the people had already gained a powerful voice in the Government. . . . Dominated by the idea of the overwhelming might of Britain and the abject weakness of India, their want of courage and faith in the nation, their rooted distrust of the national character, disbe-

lief in Indian patriotism and blindness to the possibility of true political strength and virtue in the people, precluded them from discovering the rough and narrow way to salvation. Herein lies the superiority of the new school that they have an indomitable courage and faith in the nation and the people. . . .

The new methods were first tried in the great Swadeshi outburst of the last two years,—blindly, crudely, without leading and organisation, but still with amazing results. The moving cause was a particular grievance, the Partition of Bengal; and to the removal of the particular grievance, pettiest and narrowest of all political objects, our old leaders strove hard to confine the use of this new and mighty weapon. But the popular instinct was true to itself and would have none of it. At a bound we passed therefore from mere particular grievances, however serious and intolerable, to the use of passive resistance as a means of cure for the basest and vilest feature of the present system,—the bleeding to death of a country by foreign exploitation. And from that stage we are steadily advancing . . . to the one true object of all resistance . . . —the creation of a free popular Government and the vindication of Indian liberty.

THREE. ITS NECESSITY

We have defined, so far, the occasion and the ultimate object of the passive resistance we preach. It is the only effective means, except actual armed revolt, by which the organised strength of the nation, gathering to a powerful central authority and guided by the principle of self-development and self-help, can wrest the control of our national life from the grip of an alien bureaucracy. . . . The mere effort at self-development unaided by some kind of resistance, will not materially help us towards our goal. Merely by developing national schools and colleges we shall not induce or force the bureaucracy to give up to us the control of education. Merely by attempting to expand some of our trades and industries, we shall not drive out the British exploiter or take from the British Government its sovereign power of regulating, checking or killing the growth of Swadeshi industries by the imposition of judicious taxes and duties and other methods always open to the controller of a country's finance and legislation. Still less shall we be able by that harmless means to get for ourselves the control of taxation and expenditure. Nor shall we, merely by establishing our own arbitration courts, oblige the alien control to give up the elaborate and lucrative system of Civil and Criminal Judicature which at once emasculates the nation and makes it pay heavily for its own emasculation. In none of these matters is the bureaucracy likely to budge an inch from its secure position unless it is forcibly persuaded. . . .

Organised national resistance to existing conditions, whether directed against the system of Government as such or against some particular feature of it, has three courses open to it. It may attempt to make administration under existing conditions impossible by an organised passive resistance. This was the

policy initiated by the genius of Parnell⁸ when by the plan of campaign he prevented the payment of rents in Ireland and by persistent obstruction hampered the transaction of any but Irish business in Westminster. It may attempt to make administration under existing conditions impossible by an organised aggressive resistance in the shape of an untiring and implacable campaign of assassination and a confused welter of riots, strikes and agrarian risings all over the country. . . . The third course open to an oppressed nation is that of armed revolt, which instead of bringing existing conditions to an end by making their continuance impossible sweeps them bodily out of existence. This is the old time-honoured method which the oppressed or enslaved have always adopted by preference in the past, and will adopt in the future if they see any chance of success. . . .

The choice by a subject nation of the means it will use for vindicating its liberty, is best determined by the circumstances of its servitude. The present circumstances in India seem to point to passive resistance as our most natural and suitable weapon. We would not for a moment be understood to base this conclusion upon any condemnation of other methods as in all circumstances criminal and unjustifiable. It is the common habit of established Governments and especially those which are themselves oppressors, to brand all violent methods in subject peoples and communities as criminal and wicked. When you have disarmed your slaves and legalised the infliction of bonds, stripes and death on any one of them, man, woman or child, who may dare to speak or to act against you, it is natural and convenient to try and lay a moral as well as a legal ban on any attempt to answer violence by violence, the knout [thonged whip] by the revolver, the prison by riot or agrarian rising, the gallows by the dynamite bomb. But no nation yet has listened to the cant of the oppressor when itself put to the test, and the general conscience of humanity approves the refusal. Under certain circumstances a civil struggle becomes in reality a battle and the morality of war is different from the morality of peace. To shrink from bloodshed and violence under such circumstances is a weakness deserving as severe a rebuke as Sri Krishna addressed to Arjuna when he shrank from the colossal civil slaughter on the field of Kurukshetra. Liberty is the life-breath of a nation; and when the life is attacked, when it is sought to suppress all chance of breathing by violent pressure, any and every means of self-preservation becomes right and justifiable,—just as it is lawful for a man who is being strangled to rid himself of the pressure on his throat by any means in his power. . . .

This peculiar character of passive resistance is one reason why it has found favour with the thinkers of the New Party. There are certain moral qualities necessary to self-government which have become atrophied by long disuse in our people and can only be restored either by the healthy air of a free national life in which alone they can permanently thrive or by their vigorous exercise in the intensity of a national struggle for freedom. . . . The reason why even a radical opportunist like Mr. Morley refuses us self-government is not that he does not believe in India's fitness for self-government, but that he does not

believe in India's determination to be free; on the contrary, the whole experience of the past shows that we have not been in earnest in our demand for self-government.

FOUR. ITS METHODS

The essential difference between passive or defensive and active or aggressive resistance is this, that while the method of the aggressive resister is to do something by which he can bring about positive harm to the Government, the method of the passive resister is to abstain from doing something by which he would be helping the Government. The object in both cases is the same,—to force the hands of the Government; the line of attack is different. The passive method is especially suitable to countries where the Government depends mainly for the continuance of its administration on the voluntary help and acquiescence of the subject people. The first principle of passive resistance, therefore, which the new school have placed in the forefront of their programme, is to make administration under present conditions impossible by an organised refusal to do anything which shall help either British commerce in the exploitation of the country or British officialdom in the administration of it,—unless and until the conditions are changed in the manner and to the extent demanded by the people. This attitude is summed up in the one word, Boycott. If we consider the various departments of the administration one by one, we can easily see how administration in each can be rendered impossible by successfully organised refusal of assistance. We are dissatisfied with the fiscal and economical conditions of British rule in India, with the foreign exploitation of the country, the continual bleeding of its resources, the chronic famine and rapid impoverishment which result, the refusal of the Government to protect the people and their industries. Accordingly, we refuse to help the process of exploitation and impoverishment in our capacity as consumers, we refuse henceforth to purchase foreign and especially British goods or to condone their purchase by others. . . . We are dissatisfied also with the conditions under which education is imparted in this country, its calculated poverty and insufficiency, its anti-national character, its subordination to the Government and the use made of that subordination for the discouragement of patriotism and the inculcation of loyalty. Accordingly we refuse to send our boys to Government schools or to schools aided and controlled by the Government; if this educational boycott is general and well-organised, the educational administration of the country will be rendered impossible and the control of its youthful minds pass out of the hands of the foreigner. We are dissatisfied with the administration of justice, the ruinous costliness of the civil side, the brutal rigour of its criminal penalties and procedure, its partiality, its frequent subordination to political objects. We refuse accordingly to have any resort to the alien courts of justice, and by an organised judicial boycott propose to make the bureaucratic administration of

justice impossible while these conditions continue. Finally, we disapprove of the executive administration, its arbitrariness, its meddling and inquisitorial character, its thoroughness of repression, its misuse of the police for the repression instead of the protection of the people. We refuse, accordingly, to go to the executive for help or advice or protection or to tolerate any paternal interference in our public activities, and by an organised boycott of the executive propose to reduce executive control and interference to a mere skeleton of its former self. . . . If the few refused to help, if Indians no longer consented to teach in Government schools or work in Government offices, or serve the alien as police, the administration could not continue for a day. . . .

There is a limit however to passive resistance. . . . To submit to illegal or violent methods of coercion, to accept outrage and hooliganism as part of the legal procedure of the country is to be guilty of cowardice, and, by dwarfing national manhood, to sin against the divinity within ourselves and the divinity in our motherland. The moment coercion of this kind is attempted, passive resistance ceases and active resistance becomes a duty. If the instruments of the executive choose to disperse our meeting by breaking the heads of those present, the right of self-defence entitles us not merely to defend our heads but to retaliate on those of the head-breakers. For the myrmidons of the law have ceased then to be guardians of the peace and become breakers of the peace, rioters and not instruments of authority, and their uniform is no longer a bar to the right of self-defence. . . .

The new politics is a serious doctrine and not, like the old, a thing of shows and political theatricals; it demands real sufferings from its adherents,—imprisonment, worldly ruin, death itself, before it can allow him to assume the rank of a martyr for his country. Passive resistance cannot build up a strong and great nation unless it is masculine, bold and ardent in its spirit and ready at any moment and at the slightest notice to supplement itself with active resistance. We do not want to develop a nation of women who know only how to suffer and not how to strike. . . .

We preach defensive resistance mainly passive in its methods at present, but active whenever active resistance is needed; but defensive resistance within the limits imposed by human nature and by the demands of self-respect and the militant spirit of true manhood. . . . If passive resistance should turn out either not feasible or necessarily ineffectual under the conditions of this country, we should be the first to recognise that everything must be reconsidered and that the time for new men and new methods had arrived. We recognise no political object of worship except the divinity in our Motherland, no present object of political endeavour except liberty, and no method or action as politically good or evil except as it truly helps or hinders our progress towards national emancipation.

[From *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo Ghose* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Centenary Library, 1970), 1:87–88, 90, 92–99, 101–102, 114, 116–117.]

THE MORALITY OF BOYCOTT

This article was intended for the *Bande Mātaram*, but could not be published. It was seized by the police and used as an exhibit in the Alipore conspiracy case (May 1908).

A certain class of mind shrinks from aggressiveness as if it were a sin. Their temperament forbids them to feel the delight of battle and they look on what they cannot understand as something monstrous and sinful. "Heal hate by love," "drive out injustice by justice," "slay sin by righteousness" is their cry. Love is a sacred name, but it is easier to speak of love than to love. The love which drives out hate is a divine quality of which only one man in a thousand is capable. A saint full of love for all mankind possesses it, a philanthropist consumed with a desire to heal the miseries of the race possesses it, but the mass of mankind does not and cannot rise to the height. Politics is concerned with masses of mankind and not with individuals. To ask masses of mankind to act as saints, to rise to the height of divine love and practise it in relation to their adversaries or oppressors is to ignore human nature. It is to set a premium on injustice and violence by paralysing the hand of the deliverer when raised to strike. The Gita is the best answer to those who shrink from battle as a sin, and aggression as a lowering of morality.

A poet of sweetness and love [Tagore], who has done much to awaken Bengal, has written deprecating the boycott as an act of hate. The saintliness of spirit which he would see brought into politics is the reflex of his own personality colouring the political ideals of a sattwic [pure] race. But in reality the boycott is not an act of hate. It is an act of self-defence, of aggression for the sake of self-preservation. To call it an act of hate is to say that a man who is being slowly murdered, is not justified in striking at his murderer. . . . Doubtless the self-defender is not precisely actuated by a feeling of holy sweetness towards his assailant; but to expect so much from human nature is impracticable. Certain religions demand it, but they have never been practised to the letter by their followers.

Hinduism recognises human nature and makes no such impossible demand. It sets one ideal for the saint, another for the man of action, a third for the trader, a fourth for the serf. To prescribe the same ideal for all is to bring about *varṇasaṅkara*, the confusion of duties, and destroy society and race. If we are content to be serfs, then indeed, boycott is a sin for us, not because it is a violation of love, but because it is a violation of the Sudra's duty of obedience and contentment. Politics is the ideal of the Kshatriya, and the morality of the Kshatriya ought to govern our political actions. . . .

Love has a place in politics, but it is the love of one's country, for one's countrymen, for the glory, greatness and happiness of the race, the divine *ānanda* [joy] of self-immolation for one's fellows, the ecstasy of relieving their sufferings, the joy of seeing one's blood flow for country and freedom. . . . The feeling of almost physical delight in the touch of the mother-soil, of the winds that blow

from Indian seas, of the rivers that stream from Indian hills, in the hearing of Indian speech, music, poetry, in the familiar sights, sounds, habits, dress, manners of our Indian life, this is the physical root of that love. The pride in our past, the pain of our present, the passion for the future are its trunk and branches. Self-sacrifice and self-forgetfulness, great service, high endurance for the country are its fruit. And the sap which keeps it alive is the realisation of the Motherhood of God in the country, the vision of the Mother, the knowledge of the Mother, the perpetual contemplation, adoration and service of the Mother.

Other love than this is foreign to the motives of political action. Between nation and nation there is justice, partiality, chivalry, duty, but not love. All love is either individual or for the self in the race or for the self in mankind. It may exist between individuals of different races, but the love of one race for another is a thing foreign to Nature. When therefore the boycott, as declared by the Indian race against the British, is stigmatised for want of love, the charge is bad psychology as well as bad morality. It is interest warring against interest, and hatred is directed not really against the race, but against the adverse interest. If the British exploitation were to cease tomorrow, the hatred against the British race would disappear in a moment. . . .

When *tamas*, inertia, torpor have benumbed a nation, the strongest forms of *rajas*⁹ are necessary to break the spell; there is no form of *rajas* so strong as hatred. Through *rajas* we rise to *sattva* and for the Indian temperament the transition does not take long. Already the element of hatred is giving place to the clear conception of love for the Mother as the spring of our political actions. . . .

The sword of the warrior is as necessary to the fulfilment of justice and righteousness as the holiness of the saint. Ramdas is not complete without Shivaji.¹⁰ To maintain justice and prevent the strong from despoiling, and the weak from being oppressed, is the function for which the Kshatriya was created. “Therefore,” says Sri Krishna in the *Mahabharata*, “God created battle and armour, the sword, the bow and the dagger.”

Man is of a less terrestrial mould than some would have him to be. He has an element of the divine which the politician ignores. The practical politician looks to the position at the moment and imagines that he has taken everything into consideration. He has, indeed, studied the surface . . . but he has missed what lies beyond material vision. He has left out of account the divine, the incalculable in man, that element which upsets the calculations of the schemer and disconcerts the wisdom of the diplomat.

[From *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo*, 1:124–128.]

NATIONALISM IS THE WORK OF GOD

In January 1908, addressing a Bombay audience soon after the Moderate–Extremist split, Aurobindo made his mind a blank and spoke as the spirit moved him. The result

was a declaration of the religious significance of Indian nationalism. His initial remarks are reproduced here.

There is a creed in India today which calls itself Nationalism, a creed which has come to you from Bengal. This is a creed which many of you have accepted. . . . Have you realized . . . what that means? . . . Or is it that you have merely accepted it in the pride of a superior intellectual conviction? You call yourselves Nationalists. What is Nationalism? Nationalism is not a mere political program; Nationalism is a religion that has come from God; Nationalism is a creed which you shall have to live. Let no man dare to call himself a Nationalist if he does so merely with a sort of intellectual pride, thinking that he is more patriotic, thinking that he is something higher than those who do not call themselves by that name. If you are going to be a nationalist, if you are going to assent to this religion of Nationalism, you must do it in the religious spirit. You must remember that you are the instruments of God. . . . But certain forces which are against that religion are trying to crush its rising strength. It always happens when a new religion is preached, when God is going to be born in the people, that such forces rise with all their weapons in their hands to crush the religion. In Bengal too a new religion, a religion divine and sattwic [pure] has been preached, and this religion they are trying with all the weapons at their command to crush. By what strength are we in Bengal able to survive? Nationalism is not going to be crushed. Nationalism survives in the strength of God and it is not possible to crush it, whatever weapons are brought against it. Nationalism is immortal; Nationalism cannot die; because it is no human thing, it is God who is working in Bengal. God cannot be killed, God cannot be sent to jail. When these things happen among you, I say to you solemnly, what will you do? Will you do as they do in Bengal? (*Cries of "Yes."*) Don't lightly say "yes." It is a solemn thing; and suppose that God puts you this question, how will you answer it? Have you got a real faith? Or is it merely a political aspiration? Is it merely a larger kind of selfishness? Or is it merely that you wish to be free to oppress others, as you are being oppressed? Do you hold your political creed from a higher source? Is it God that is born in you? Have you realized that you are merely the instruments of God, that your bodies are not your own? You are merely instruments of God for the work of the Almighty. Have you realized that? If you have . . . you are truly Nationalists; then alone will you be able to restore this great nation.

[From *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo Ghose*, 1:652–653.]

INDIA'S MISSION: THE RESURRECTION OF HINDUISM

In a speech at Uttarpara to the Society for the Protection of Religion after his release from prison in May 1909, Aurobindo relayed to his countrymen the messages that had

mystically come to him during his confinement. First of all he was to dedicate himself to God's work. Second, through her national revival India was to spread the universal truth of Hinduism throughout the world.

The protection and upraising before the world of the Hindu religion, that is the work before us. But what is the Hindu religion? What is this religion which we call Sanatan, eternal? It is the Hindu religion only because the Hindu nation has kept it, because in this Peninsula it grew up in the seclusion of the sea and the Himalayas, because in this sacred and ancient land it was given as a charge to the Aryan race to preserve through the ages. But it is not circumscribed by the confines of a single country, it does not belong peculiarly and forever to a bounded part of the world. That which we call the Hindu religion is really the eternal religion, because it is the universal religion which embraces all others. If a religion is not universal, it cannot be eternal. A narrow religion, a sectarian religion, an exclusive religion can live only for a limited time and a limited purpose. This is the one religion that can triumph over materialism by including and anticipating the discoveries of science and the speculations of philosophy. It is the one religion which . . . embraces in its compass all the possible means by which man can approach God. It is the one religion which insists every moment on the truth which all religions acknowledge that He is in all men and all things and that in Him we move and have our being. It is the one religion which enables us not only to understand and believe this truth but to realize it with every part of our being. It is the one religion which shows the world what the world is, that it is the Lila of Vasudeva.¹¹ It is the one religion which shows us how we can best play our part in that Lila, its subtlest laws and its noblest rules. It is the one religion which does not separate life in any smallest detail from religion, which knows what immortality is and has utterly removed from us the reality of death. . . .

This movement is not a political movement and . . . nationalism is not politics but a religion, a creed, a faith. I say it again today, but I put it in another way. I say no longer that nationalism is a creed, a religion, a faith; I say that it is the Sanatan Dharma which for us is nationalism. This Hindu nation was born with the Sanatan Dharma, with it it moves and with it it grows. When the Sanatan Dharma declines, then the nation declines, and if the Sanatan Dharma were capable of perishing, with the Sanatan Dharma it would perish.

[From *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo Ghose*, 2:9–10.]

SARALA DEVI CHAUDHURANI AND THE REVIVAL OF REVOLUTIONARY FEELING

Sarala Devi Chaudhurani (Ghosal) (1872–1945), a niece of Rabindranath Tagore, was influential in early twentieth-century Bengal through her explicit use of religious and cultural symbols to galvanize political will, and through her bridging of western and

eastern Indian political tactics. She had spent her young years in western India with her uncle Satyendranath, where she witnessed B. G. Tilak's revival of the Ganapati and Shivaji coronation festivals in the mid-1890s, as well as the organization of societies for physical and military training.

Upon her return to Calcutta in 1902 she established the practice of celebrating heroes on what she called Birashtami Utsab, on the eighth (Ashtami) day of the Durga Puja. She also founded an academy for martial arts in south Calcutta. During the anti-partition agitations of 1906, revolutionary societies such as the Anushilan Samiti, a regional organization for an armed revolution, often preached violence, and many gymnasia teaching wrestling, *lathi* play, and martial arts, following the example of Sarala Devi's academy, were formed for the purposes of armed resistance. In Mymensingh, she and Bipin Chandra Pal also founded a festival modeled on that for Shivaji; in searching for a Bengali hero, they settled upon Raja Pratapaditya of Jessore, who had headed an unsuccessful rebellion against Aurangzeb. They also celebrated Kālī, Pratapaditya's tutelary deity, consciously creating a parallel between Kālī and Bhavānī, Shivaji's goddess. Sarala Devi's recourse to Pratapaditya did not endear her to her uncle Rabindranath, who countered that the Raja had not been a man of exemplary moral character. Another "first" associated with Sarala Devi's name is the employment of "Bande Mātaram" as a national slogan: this occurred in 1905 under the auspices of the Mymensingh Suhrid Samiti, of which she was a member.

REMINISCENCES POLITICAL AND PERSONAL

Sarala Devi's autobiography was published serially in a Bengali literary magazine near the end of her life, in 1942–1943.

[POLITICS]

(I discovered to my horror that our men were afflicted with a strange fear complex where white people were concerned, and I was determined to do something to free men from this morbid aberration.) . . . We must be combative, I felt—British boxing versus Indian fisticuffs!! To give my thoughts a practical shape, I announced in the pages of the *Bharati*, a journal of our own, offering to publish tales of brave retaliation by Bengali men, who had been victims of indignities in the hands of the British soldiers or civilians, and who did not wait meekly to submit to such humiliations, hoping for redress in the courts of law. Reports came pouring in and we printed them in *Bharati*. . . .

A vast number of young people and groups of students from schools and colleges sought to see me. From amongst young people I formed a select group. I initiated the indoctrination of this group by making the members salute a map of India, and then taking a pledge that with all their heart, body and soul they would serve the motherland. I tied a *rakhi* (symbolic thread) on their wrist

binding them to their oath of dedication and sacrifice. The (Mughal) Emperor Humayun once promised to court risks in protecting a Rajput princess by accepting a *rakhi* from her. Similarly, my *rakhi* was an acceptance of commitment by the young men of my group to face any hardship in the cause of service to the motherland. Though in no way a secret society, I still cautioned the members not to talk too much about their mission publicly. I strongly believed that a resolution nursed close to one's heart gained in motivation.

Manilal Ganguly was one of the young men who often visited me. He ran a literary society in Bhowanipore, and once invited me to chair the society's annual function. In my life I had been intrepid enough to travel all by myself to many distant places away from home. Even so, the thought of presiding over a literary event, consisting of men only, in the heart of Calcutta, appeared daunting. I hesitated, but when Manilal continued to press, I gave him an alternative proposal, which was to convert their literary function to commemorate the legendary Bengali hero Pratapaditya. . . . I advised him to comb through Calcutta to locate young people who are skilled in martial arts, such as boxing, wrestling, display with swords and rods. . . . Matilal agreed, and the programmes for the event were laid out by me. Matilal read a short piece on Pratapaditya, which was followed by demonstrations of martial arts. The event concluded with my distribution of medals. . . .

This function was attended by almost all the Calcutta press. Reported the *Sanjivani*, "It was, indeed most gratifying to find a lady presiding over a gathering of young men in the very heart of Calcutta." *Bangabasi* was even more enthusiastic. "What a wonderful sight it was! A meeting with no speeches, no table thumping, only evocative of a past hero of Bengal, demonstration of martial arts by youths of Bengal, and their leader is just a young Bengali lass—a Brahmin lady from whose tender hands the boys received their prizes." . . . Bipin Pal, on the other hand, made a tongue-in-cheek comment in "Young India," "As necessity is the mother of invention, Sarala Devi is the mother of Pratapaditya to meet the necessity of a hero in Bengal." . . .

Each year during the annual session of the Indian National Congress, a corps of volunteers is raised. The volunteers receive training by way of paramilitary exercises and training. After the session is over, this voluntary body is disbanded and in the process all the rigorous training becomes a wasted effort. It occurred to me that a preferred alternative would be to form a permanent body of volunteers who would receive regular training once a week for a whole year, and that to me would ultimately be of immense worth. . . . I searched for an expert coach to train our boys in the art of handling swords, clubs, etc. I eventually found one. He was Professor Murtaza, a Muslim. I invited him to train our boys on terms of a fairly good remuneration to a club which I had founded at our home. This club later shifted to No. 26, Ballygunge Circular Road. It was a big house with a fairly sizeable lawn in front and a water tank in the rear. Behind the tank was a square plot which was used by the boys to practice with

their weapons and equipment. I personally funded the expenses of the club. I made it a point to be present when training sessions were on, sitting at a table and marking the attendance of trainees. In time the reputation of the club spread, and boys from other areas traveled long distances to join the club. Similar clubs sprang up in many other locations. Pulin Das, the leader of the Anusilan Samiti, arrived from Dhaka. Many of these clubs received assistance from me, either in cash or in kind, and they, by turn, borrowed the services of Professor Murtaza. . . .

My thoughts for some time were churning over the notion of a designated National festival, to be observed on a fixed day each year. I hit upon the appropriate occasion quite by serendipity. I discovered that the second day of our autumnal Durga Puja festival, commonly known as Ashtami, had also sometimes been celebrated as Birashtami—paying homage to the brave and the valiant. I found my answer. To kick off this festival, a public announcement was made that Birashtami would be celebrated on the day of the Ashtami on the grounds of No. 26, Ballygunge Circular Road, with competitive display of martial arts by young men. Invitations were sent out to known clubs for their members to attend the festival and participate in the competition. A married daughter of the dowager Begum of Murshidabad was a good friend of mine. She along with her mother and aunts sat on a dais screened by a lace curtain. I had earlier persuaded her to distribute the prizes which she did by extending her arms through the lace curtain, while remaining otherwise invisible. The prizes consisted of boxing gloves, knives, and swords, etc. Each participant also received a specially struck medal to mark the occasion.

We also set up a ritual of how to observe Birashtami festival. Participants were to stand in a circle around a decorated sword, sing hymns of praise recalling past heroes and render homage to the sword by offerings of flowers. . . . As the name of each hero was mentioned in the hymn and flowers were offered in his memory, the entire crowd felt inspired and excited. The hymn was composed by Ashutosh Ghosh, a reputed nationalist from Khiddepore. A patriotic song was also sung on that occasion.

Since then the observation of Birashtami gained rapid currency in Bengal. Those who could not travel to Calcutta celebrated the day in their own localities. In places, where facilities of martial arts were not available, I suggested that the occasion should be observed by organizing a swimming contest. The basic idea was to participate in some form of physical activities.

[MUSIC] . . .

I was passionate about music, and singing was my obsession. Deep in my heart somewhere dwelt the presiding deity of this muse to whom I paid daily homage. . . . The high priest, was my uncle Rabi [Rabindranath Tagore]. Wherever I went, I picked up new melodies, new musical forms. From street singers

I learned their music by inviting them to sing for me and paying them for their trouble.

When my maternal grandfather occasionally resided in his Chinsura house, I would often visit him and collect from his boatmen many *baul* songs.¹² Whenever I picked up any new songs I could not rest until Uncle Rabi heard me, for there was none to match him in his knowledge and appreciation of music. He had the great gift of adopting my melodies, alter them, put words to them and create a new song. . . . The first two lines of the “*Bande Mataram*” song were put to music by him. . . . One day he asked me to compose music for the rest of the words. So I did. The song gained currency.

[MARRIAGE]

I received a long letter from my elder sister informing me that mother was in very poor health and that one did not know what turn it could take. She also added that one of my mother’s last wishes was that I should get married and that I should not take her wish lightly. My family knew my views on marriage; I would not accept anyone as my husband unless I could personally approve of the individual concerned, regardless of his social standing. Apparently, they had settled on a groom, who so my sister averred, could not but be acceptable to me. . . . This selected person was a leading member of the Arya Samaj which had a close link with our Brahmo Samaj, besides being a reputed orator, a dedicated nationalist, and, most importantly handsome.

“Come and see for yourself before making up your mind either way. Do not thoughtlessly reject this proposal which will hasten our mother’s end.” A time tested pretext of raising the spectre of threats to parents’ lives to get around recalcitrant children to agree to marry! This ploy was used to trap me.

My mother at that time was in Baidyanath trying to recover her health and, therefore, I had to head for that place instead of Calcutta. Even before I reached Baidyanath, my elder sister had conspiratorially made all arrangements for my marriage. She had almost tied me up hand and foot with no scope to make any move. From the moment I alighted at the railway station of Baidyanath, I discovered that I did so as a confirmed bride. I was whisked away in a palanquin, my feet hardly touching the ground. I found that the date of the wedding was already fixed, invitations sent out, and the groom’s party had reached and was settled in another house. All this was done keeping me absolutely in the dark, in case I did anything that could upset my parents. I was utterly bewildered.

The next day was set down for the traditional pre-nuptial ritual of anointing the bride with turmeric paste, for which all the required paraphernalia had been procured in advance by my sister with the help of Sankar Pandit of Bhowanipore, the designated head of the groom’s party. Morning saw the arrival of a host of relations, including Uncle Rabi, from several parts of the country—from Bolepur, from Ranchi, from Calcutta, from Madhupur. The house teemed with

friends and relations. The *sehnai* played wedding music throughout the day.¹³ In the evening the bride, me, had a brief glimpse of the groom. No denying, he was handsome.

The wedding took place in the evening of the following day. The formalities were concluded in due course. A predestined bond, dictated by the karma of our past lives!! The die was cast; no turning back now.

[From Sarala Devi Chaudhurani, *Jibaner Jharapata (The Fallen Leaves of Life)* (Calcutta: Rupa, 1382 BS [1975]), 126–128, 133–135, 140–142, 185–187. Trans. Sukhendu Ray and Bharati Ray. Headings added.]

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LINGUISTIC CONSCIOUSNESS: HINDI VERSUS URDU

During this period, political/literary conflicts over the nature and choice of language were intense, and began to reach a wider audience than that of English-speaking urban elite men. Growing literacy among the middle classes, and the increasing availability of locally owned printing presses, resulted from the 1880s onward in a flourishing pamphlet literature. Satires and polemical attacks were volleyed back and forth. Particularly intense conflicts arose between partisans of Hindi and Urdu, because the creation from a single common grammar (the Khari Boli of the Delhi region) of two separate literary languages was a process both politically and religiously fraught. Urdu, which used Persian as a source of script and intellectual vocabulary, claimed a long and sophisticated literary tradition; but it was often identified with Muslim culture and foreign influences. Modern standard Hindi, which used Sanskrit as a source of script and intellectual vocabulary, was still in the process of taking shape, and was perceived as a Hindu and/or nationalist project. In addition to cultural loyalties, bureaucratic choices of script and vocabulary meant that access to government jobs was often at stake. Urdu was depicted by its defenders as a polished language with a long history of urbanity and sophistication, while Hindi was seen as a crude, imitative, politically motivated upstart. By contrast, Hindi was endowed by its advocates with the religiously grounded chastity and purity appropriate to a “wife” (and to a patriotic national speech-goddess), while Urdu was imagined as a sleazy, untrustworthy courtesan.

[*VAKIL RATNACHAND*]: *HINDI AND URDU IN THE COURTROOM*

“Hindi Urdu ki natak” (A drama about Hindi and Urdu) is a pro-Hindi courtroom drama involving three judges (an English one, who seems to be in charge, a Hindu, and a Muslim), the defendant Urdu Bibi, the plaintiff Hindi Devi, and various lawyers and supporters on both sides. The play depicts Urdu as a lady of easy virtue, while virtually elevating Hindi into a benevolent, if patronizing, goddess.

The play is ascribed to one “Vakil Ratnachand,” about whom nothing is known. Popular pamphlets of this kind were often either misattributed to some famous figure, or entirely anonymous. The interest of this courtroom drama lies not in its author or its literary quality, but in the vigor and topicality of its polemics: it presents in an engaging popular form its own version of one of the major political and cultural issues of its day. In the first excerpt to follow, Hindi Devi’s petition is read by one of her lawyers, Lala Muchandhar (the “moustached one,” monkey trainer or buffoon) Ray; in the second, Urdu Bibi’s defense is presented by her lawyer Maulvi Akil (the “sensible one”).

[HINDI DEVI’S PETITION]

1. This country of Hindustan was once in the hands of my mother, Devi Sanskrit, for longer than men could remember. And during that time, she used to bring happiness to kings and subjects alike. All the people had true, pure thoughts; honest and helpful, they were focused on the uplift of the country. However, around the time I was born, Muslims snatched away this country and visited all manner of suffering upon our people. Of all the suffering, what pained more than anything was that they made the inhabitants of this country abandon their Mother, the language of the land, and drink at the breast of the defendant, Urdu Bibi. Constantly suckling at her breast, they were well-nourished and grew strong. They became infatuated with her even as they couldn’t forget about me. Thinking me “uncivilized,” they started to feel ashamed to call me Mother. Given such a state of affairs, my mother Sanskrit decided to retire to the forest. And I, the plaintiff, took my several sisters and settled down in a cave in the Himalayas.

2. Seeing the advance of my enemy, I, the plaintiff, felt deep resentment in my heart. My mother was very grieved to see her own daughter become the slave of Urdu Bibi. However, she didn’t have the courage to complain to the emperor at the time because he was a tyrant, and a very dishonest man. Yet I would always pray to God that the time would come for a just king. And my thoughts were always on how to alleviate the suffering of the people. How could I have filled the people with joy and prosperity when I too had been separated from my daughter by the sorcery of Urdu Bibi?

3. Hundreds of years later, my prayers have finally been answered. And yet, in this matter I am still worried that some of the king’s ministers, who are slaves of Urdu Bibi and who would say anything to keep the king happy, will turn this courtroom into a cow pen with their coarse manners, and at this time of justice, kick and posture like jackasses. The reason I am afraid is that even though the king is just, he is very much under the sway of his ministers. I have a lot of trepidation with respect to this matter, but as a great man once said, “A nice flower isn’t had without some cutting.” Thus I have hope along with my fear.

4. [For this reason the plaintiff asks that—] Urdu Bibi's interference be rooted out. Just as she has interfered with my sisters in Bengal, Bombay, Bihar, Orissa, Mandaraj and various other places, so does she interfere with me in the Northwest and in Avadh.

[URDU BIBI'S DEFENSE]

1. [The defendant Urdu considers the plaintiff's petition utterly false and denies all charges.]

2. A long time ago our emperors snatched this country from the plaintiff's mother, Sanskrit, and gave it to my mother, Persian. My mother and I have been in possession of this country for about 700 years. Under the circumstances, given that we have been established here for the past 500 years, the statute of limitations has expired on the plaintiff's petition.

3. No one other than the emperor has the right to choose which language to recognize at any given time. So there is no point in proceeding with this lawsuit.

4. When, as she herself has testified, the plaintiff has lived in the jungle for such a long period of time, she is hardly fit to live in the city, what to say of entering this courtroom? She's become *janglī* [wild, uncivilized]. The petition of such a person is not worth pursuing.

5. When, as the plaintiff says in her own account, the people consider her uncivilized and despise her, then her authority is contrary to public sentiment. And for this reason, her petition cannot move forward.

6. Everyone is perfectly comfortable with the defendant remaining in possession of the land. The allegation that she harms us in her tenure of the land is utterly false. On the contrary, by taking up residence here and occupying this land, she has turned country bumpkins into men. She's given them refinement and *éclat*. Just look at Pandit Buddhiprakash Sahib. He has such a long [Muslim-looking] beard as a result of his love for my client! If not for that, how would he have had the good fortune to speak with such a forked tongue?

7. When something has been in effect for so long, it's not at all appropriate to change it. And then just think of all the trouble that would ensue from changing it. Since there is no real need to change anything, it would be highly inappropriate to make any modifications.

[From Vakil Ratnachand, *Hindī Urdu kī Nāṭak: Hindi Versus Urdu* (n.p., 1890), scene 4, 18–19, and scene 6, 30–31. Trans. Pamela Lothspeich.]

LALA LAJPAT RAI: "LION OF THE PUNJAB"

After Bengal and Bombay, the province of North India that contributed the most volunteers for the more militant wing of the Congress was "the land of the five rivers," the Punjab (so named from the Persian words *panj*, "five," and *āb*, "water, river"). Here

the marriage of politics and religion initially took the form of the militant, Hindu-centric nationalism of the Arya Samaj, which was brought to Lahore in 1877 by Swami Dayanand Saraswati. Punjab's Hindus were outnumbered by Muslims and threatened by conversions to the smaller but caste-free Sikh community, or to Christianity. Dayanand's message appealed to young men anxious to reform and strengthen their community and to bring it into revitalizing touch with its ancient heritage.

One such young man was Lala Lajpat Rai (1865–1928). His openness to a new religious perspective resembled that of his parents: his father's father was a Jain, and his father a Hindu who taught Persian and Urdu and much admired the Persian literary and cultural tradition; his mother's ancestors had been Sikhs, but after her marriage she followed Hindu devotional practices. Lajpat Rai received his elementary education mainly from his father, and always did well at the schools he attended. At fifteen he easily passed the entrance examination to the Punjab University College at Lahore; he entered it at the age of sixteen. Since his father was quite poor, he lived very frugally. He worked so hard in his first year that he fell ill. After a second year, he obtained a license to practice as a law clerk, and left college to begin supporting himself and helping his family. Three years later he passed a higher legal examination and commenced a career that was to make him a wealthy man in a few more years.

In 1881, in his first year in college, Lajpat Rai joined the local Brahmo Samaj, but in the following year he was drawn into the Arya Samaj by college friends and by his growing love for ancient Hindu culture. From then on, he worked to enlarge and strengthen the Samaj, particularly by giving speeches, writing letters to newspapers, and raising and contributing funds. His favorite project was the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic School (1886) and College (1889) at Lahore, which resembled Sayyid Ahmad Khan's Anglo-Mohammedan College at Aligarh. Each institution combined instruction in English and Western learning with the study of the classical language, literature, and religion of its own community, and each was established in a region where that community was a minority. Lajpat Rai settled in Lahore in 1892 to continue his law practice, and thereafter gave himself increasingly to the service of the Samaj and the college. In 1901 he resolved that whatever he earned would be devoted to public work.

By this time Lajpat Rai had won wide respect among his educated countrymen for his writings in Urdu and English and his speeches at the 1888 and 1893 meetings of the Indian National Congress. In the 1890s he wrote a series of Urdu biographies of heroic leaders: Mazzini (whom he made his political guru), Garibaldi, Shivaji, Dayananda, and Shri Krishna.¹⁴ He also did relief work during the famine years at the end of the century, helped found orphanages for Hindu children, and publicized the need for agricultural development, technical education, and national industry and banking.

In the next decade, Lajpat Rai rose to national prominence as a militant nationalist. He had met and admired Tilak at the Lahore Congress sessions of 1893 and 1900, and when he founded a new English-language newspaper, *The Punjabee*, in 1904, he appointed as its editor a journalist from Poona recommended to him by Tilak. At the 1905 Congress Lajpat Rai stirred his younger listeners with his call for greater manliness in the face of government repression. In both 1906 and 1907 he tried to mediate

between the Extremists and the Moderates in the Congress. Then his arrest and six-month deportation to Burma without trial in 1907 made him a national hero. Rejecting the Extremists' offer to elect him Congress president in 1907, he remained with the Moderates after the two factions split. He again focused his mind on the problems of the poor, the uneducated, and the Untouchables. In some of these concerns, as well as in his 1905 advocacy of passive resistance and his 1907 endorsement of a stoppage of all work to protest an injustice (*hartāl*), he preceded Gandhi and may have influenced him.

When the First World War broke out, Lajpat Rai was in London as a member of a Congress delegation. Rather than risk rearrest in wartime India, he chose to go into exile in the United States. There, and in Japan for six months, he wrote and spoke about the nationalist movement in India, but steadfastly refused to join the Indian revolutionaries who tried to recruit him. As an active and successful propagandist for Indian nationalism in the United States, he gave talks, wrote several books, and edited a monthly journal, *Young India*. The British would not give him a visa to return to India until the end of 1919, but when he finally landed in February 1920 he was warmly greeted at a crowded public reception chaired by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, with Tilak and Annie Besant on the platform. He accepted the presidency of the special Congress session in September of that eventful year, and correctly predicted that Gandhi's non-cooperation program would not win sufficient response to achieve his objective of "swaraj in one year." Jailed for sedition in 1922, he wrote both gratefully and critically of Gandhi, who had just called off the movement.

In the next few years, Lajpat Rai continued on his practical path of work for both national and Hindu interests. In a series of articles on "The Hindu–Muslim Problem" that appeared in leading Indian newspapers in 1924, he proposed "a clear partition of India into a Muslim India and a non-Muslim India" (see selections in chapter 7 below), with Bengal and the Punjab to be bisected. He joined, and in 1925 presided over, the newly formed Hindu Mahasabha, and was elected to the Central Legislative Assembly. His health was already failing when in 1928 he led a demonstration in front of the Lahore railway station against the all-British commission to consider modifications in India's constitution. He braved the policemen who were threatening the demonstration, and was beaten in the chest. Eighteen days later he was dead, having earned once more the sobriquet "the Lion of the Punjab."

AN OPEN LETTER TO SAYYID AHMAD KHAN

In 1888, at the age of twenty-three, Lajpat Rai attacked the Muslim leader Sayyid Ahmad Khan (see chapters 2 and 4) for opposing the demands for political reforms made by the newly organized Indian National Congress. His four peppery letters to a Lahore Urdu newspaper were translated into English and circulated among delegates to the 1888 Congress session, where they won immediate notice for young Lajpat Rai.

From childhood, I was taught to respect the opinions and the teachings of the white-bearded Syed of Aligarh. Your *Social Reformer* was constantly read to me

by my fond father, who looked upon you as no less than a prophet of the nineteenth century. . . . Is it strange then that I have been astonished to read what you now speak and write about the “National Congress”? . . . I from amongst your old admirers will take upon myself the duty of reminding you of what, in moments of wisdom, was recorded and published by your pen and tongue, and this duty, I promise, I will fulfil with the utmost pleasure and with feelings of the highest satisfaction.

I will begin with your book on the “Causes of the Indian Revolt”, which was written in 1858. . . . In this book, after having tried to prove that the Mutiny of 1857 was no “religious war,” nor the result of a preconcerted conspiracy, you say that “most men, I believe, agree in thinking that it is highly conducive to the welfare and prosperity of Government—indeed, that it is essential to its stability—that the people should have a voice in its Councils. It is from the voice of the people that Government can learn whether its projects are likely to be well received. The voice of the people can alone check errors in the bud and warn us of dangers before they burst upon and destroy us.” To make the matter more clear you go on saying that “this voice, however, can never be heard, and this security never acquired, unless the people are allowed a share in the consultations of Government. The security of a government, it will be remembered, is founded on its knowledge of the character of the governed as well as on its careful observance of their rights and privileges.” These are noble words, nobly spoken; words of sterling honesty and independence of spirit. Can they bear any other meaning than that which attaches to that resolution of the National Congress which prays for the introduction of a representative element into the constitution of our Legislative Councils? . . . How can the people of a country have their voice constantly heard if not through representatives? . . . Nay, further . . . in your book you even go to the length of saying that your countrymen should be selected to form an assembly like the English Parliament (which demand, at the time you advanced it, was certainly more premature than it now is, though the National Congress, with all the advantages that the country has had in the way of education and enlightenment since that miserable year of 1858, only advocates the partial introduction of a representative element in the Legislative Councils), I shall give some more extracts from the same work.

There you say: “I do not want to enter here into the question as to how the ignorant and uneducated natives of Hindustan could be allowed a share in the deliberations of the Legislative Council, or as to how they should be selected to form an assembly like the English Parliament. These are knotty points. All I wish to prove is that such a step is not only advisable but absolutely necessary, and that the disturbances are due to the neglect of such a measure.” . . .

Sir Syed, does it not sound strange that the writer of the words above quoted should put himself forward as the leader of the anti-Congress movement? Is it not one more proof of India’s misfortune that the writer of the above words should impute bad motives to the supporters of the National Congress, mainly

because they advocate the introduction of some sort of representation in the Legislative Councils of India? Is not your charge of sedition against the promoters of the Congress, in the face of these, a mere mockery, a contradiction in terms? Thirty years ago, you advocated the institution of a Parliament, and yet you chide us saying that we want an Indian Parliament. . . . Mark the difference. India is no longer what it was thirty years ago. In the course of this period it has made a marked advance towards a higher civilization. The natives of India are no longer, with very few exceptions, ignorant or uneducated. The rays of education are penetrating and shedding their wholesome light inside most Indian homes; hundreds of thousands of Indians are as well educated as any average English gentleman, and we see scores of our countrymen every year crossing the “black waters” to witness with their own eyes the proceedings of the great British Parliament and personally familiarize themselves with the political institutions of the English nation. Can you in face of these facts still call us “seditious”?

[From Lala Lajpat Rai, *Writings and Speeches*, ed.
Vijaya Chandra Joshi (Delhi: University Publishers, 1966), 1:1–4.]

REFORM VERSUS REVIVAL

In his 1904 article “Reform or Revival?,” Lajpat Rai deftly turned the tables on the reformers by suggesting that the model toward which they wanted to change India was a foreign one, and then asking whether they wanted to adopt foreign vices as well. In the end he thought the differences between the two schools were not worth arguing about.

One class of people who have already established a name for themselves do not like to give up the name they have patented and by which they have gained distinction. These latter gentlemen call themselves reformers and insist upon certain social changes being introduced in the name of “reform” and reform only. The other class who have lately come into prominence call themselves “revivalists,” and they swear that any change in the social customs and institutions of the community can only be introduced under the shadow of revival. . . . Both classes are to all appearances sincere in their convictions and efforts, but to the great misfortune of the country and the nation they cannot join their heads and work amicably. The wordy weapons are sometimes changed, and while the reformers take their stand on “reform on rational lines” the revivalists plead for “reform on national lines.” Here for once at least they seem to agree on reform, as the force of the difference is centered on the words “rational” and “national.” . . .

We may be pardoned for pointing out that to us the fight seems to be generally on the same lines and on the same grounds which marked the polemics of the old class of Pandits. The real truth is that the so-called reformers are mostly in faith and in religion Brahmos. They were the earliest in the field and fought for reform when the revivalists had not yet come into existence. The revivalists

are the products of a wider diffusion of Sanskrit literature which has taken place principally within the last quarter of a century. This study has afforded them sufficient and strong evidence of their ancestors having enjoyed a great and glorious civilization from which most of the present evil practices and customs that are the bane of modern Hinduism were absent. They, therefore, naturally look to the past for light and guidance and plead that a revival might lead them into that haven of progress which is the object of all. . . .

Cannot a revivalist, arguing in the same strain, ask the reformers into what they wish to reform us? Whether they want us to be reformed on the pattern of the English or the French? Whether they want us to accept the divorce laws of Christian society or the temporary marriages that are now so much in favour in France or America? Whether they want to make men of our women by putting them into those avocations for which nature never meant them? . . . Whether they want us to reform into Sunday drinkers of brandy and promiscuous eaters of beef? In short, whether they want to revolutionise our society by an outlandish imitation of European customs and manners and an undiminished adoption of European vice? The revivalists do not admit that the institutions which they want to revive are dead, burnt and gone. The very fact that they wish to revive them goes to show that they believe that there is still some life left in them and that given the proper remedy, their present unhealthy and abnormal state is sure to disappear and result in the bringing about of the normal and healthy condition of affairs. . . .

The real significance of these words—"reform" and "revival"—if any, seems to be in the authority or authorities from which the reformers and the revivalists respectively seek their inspiration for guidance in matters social. The former are bent on relying more upon reason and the experience of European society, while the latter are disposed to primarily look at their Shastras and the past history, and the traditions of their people and the ancient institutions of the land which were in vogue when the nation was at the zenith of its glory. On our part we here in the Punjab are prepared to take our inspiration from both these sources, though we prefer to begin with the latter and call in the assistance of the former mainly to understand and explain what is not clear and ambiguous in the latter. But so long as our conclusions are principally the same, I think the fight is not worth being continued and may be dropped for good.

[From Lajpat Rai, *Writings and Speeches*, 1:46–47, 50, 53–54.]

THE COMING POLITICAL STRUGGLE

In a fiery speech seconding the 1905 Congress resolution in protest against the government's repressive measures, Lajpat Rai denounced these "Russian methods" and called for his countrymen to behave in a "manly and vigorous" way toward their rulers.

I am afraid I cannot deliver a speech in the strain which we have been hearing on the resolution on the "Partition of Bengal" and the present resolution before

you. I give it my heartiest support on two grounds. You have been hearing of the misfortunes of our brethren of Bengal. I am rather inclined to congratulate them on the splendid opportunity to which an all-wise Providence, in his dispensation, has afforded to them by heralding the dawn of a new political era for this country. I think the honour was reserved for Bengal, as Bengal was the first to benefit by the fruits of English education. Bengal, up to this time—excuse me for saying that—the Bengal lion, by some cause, had degenerated into a jackal, and I think Lord Curzon has done us a great service by provoking the lion in his own den and rousing him to a sense of consciousness of his being a lion. I think no greater service could have been done to India, to the cause of India or to Bengal, by any other statesman. There are times, gentlemen, when I am inclined to pray that from time to time God might be pleased to send Viceroy like Lord Curzon to this country, in order to awaken the people of this country to a sense of their responsibility in this matter. Gentlemen, I believe, and I believe earnestly, that the political struggle has only commenced. . . . Was it not perfectly right to take a page from the book of the Englishman on the methods of constitutional agitation and adopt those methods which will be appreciated by themselves? Now, let us see what Englishmen in England do. I do not say that our conditions allow of our exactly copying or imitating them, but surely we have a right to adopt that spirit, understand that spirit and follow it. Let me tell you what are the methods adopted by Englishmen in England when they have a grievance to be listened to by Government. The method which is perfectly legitimate, perfectly constitutional and perfectly justifiable, is the method of passive resistance. Although I am not at the present moment quoting any social democrat or labourman, I must admire them; I have great respect for them. I must tell you that the message which the people of England wanted to send to you through me was the message that in our utterances, in our agitations and in our fight and struggle for liberty, we ought to be more manly than we have been heretofore. (*Cheers.*) An Englishman hates or dislikes nothing like beggary. . . . Therefore, it is our duty to show to the Englishmen that we have risen to the sense of consciousness, that we are no longer beggars and that we are subjects of an Empire where people are struggling to achieve that position which is their right by right of natural law. Gentlemen, at every stage people were arbiters of their destiny, but we are not so at the present moment. We are perfectly justified in trying to become arbiters of our own destiny and in trying to obtain freedom. I think the people of Bengal ought to be congratulated. . . . I am proud of them. They have begun the battle . . . and they have begun it in right manly style. They have effaced all those taunts, they have effaced all those insinuations against them of being timid and cowardly; they have exhibited a manliness, they have exhibited a spirit in this battle which has to be commended to other Provinces of India. If the other Provinces of India will just follow their example, I say the day is not far from distant. . . . If, therefore, you want to be heard, and you want to be heard with respect, you must

approach with determination, with evidences of determination, with signs that you are determined to achieve your rights at any cost. Unless you do that, the goddess of liberty is very jealous. She shall never allow you to approach her, and she shall never allow you to enter her portals . . . ; you must purify yourselves through the ordeals of fire and self-sacrifice. The goddess of liberty is the most sacred goddess in the world, and before you can approach her, you should show by your life, life of self-denial, that you are fit to enter her temple. (*Cheers.*) We are just awakening to a sense of our duty and a sense of responsibility to the motherland. It may be that with the consciousness of that strength we may tread the right way, the right path in the struggle for freedom. . . .

If you have adopted this manly and vigorous policy, be prepared for the logical consequence. Don't conceal your heads, don't behave like cowards. Once having adopted that manly policy, stick to it till the last. Glorify yourselves as I have told you. Is it not a matter of shame for us that this National Congress in the last twenty-one years should not have produced at least a number of political San-yasis that could sacrifice their lives for the political regeneration of the country? . . . Let it have its legitimate offsprings: a band of earnest missionaries to work out the political regeneration of the country. . . . If you show . . . our rulers that we are steadfast in our determination, . . . in our devotion to our cause, I assure you there is no power in the world that can prevent you from going forward.

[From Lajpat Rai, *Writings and Speeches*, 1:97–101.]

UNTOUCHABILITY MUST GO

In line with the Arya Samaj's opposition to caste distinctions, Lajpat Rai forcefully stated the case for ending the age-old practice of treating certain castes as Untouchable. The following is from the opening two paragraphs of "The Depressed Classes," an article from 1909.

There can be no denying the fact that the rigidity of the Hindu caste system is the bane of Hindu society. It is a great barrier in the way of the social and national progress of the Hindus. It confronts them at every step and slackens the speed with which, otherwise, the nation would climb up to the heights of national solidarity. The condition of the "low" castes, sometimes described as "untouchables," at other times as the "depressed classes," is nothing short of disgraceful. It is a disgrace to our humanity, our sense of justice, and our feeling of social affinity. It is useless to hope for any solidarity so long as the depressed classes continue to be so low in the social scale as they are. The intellectual and moral status of the community as a whole cannot be appreciably raised without the co-operation of all the classes forming the community. So long then, as there are classes amongst us who are untouchable by the so-called superior classes, because of their having been born of certain parents, the moral and intellectual elevation of the community as a whole can only proceed by slow, very slow, degrees. The condition of the depressed classes is a standing blot on our social organisation,

and we must remove that blot if we are really desirous of securing the efficiency of our social organism. All the parts of a whole must be raised, not necessarily to the same level but to a level from which they can, by their individual efforts, talents and achievements, rise to the highest possible position within the reach of the members of the social organism.

The present arrangement is a cruel and unjust arrangement. Besides, it is both economically and politically unsound. A community which allows so much valuable human material to rot in a state of utter depression and helplessness, cannot be said to be economically wise. As to the political danger involved by the continuance of these classes in their present condition, one need only look at the arguments advanced by our friends of the Muslim League in support of their contention for a larger representation on the Legislative Councils than they are entitled to by virtue of their numerical strength. Quite ignoring the fact that they are as much affected by these classes as the Hindus, they make it a point to say that in counting the Hindus for the purposes of representation the untouchables enumerated with them should be excluded. Whatever may be the value of this argument for the purpose for which it is used, there can be no doubt that the existence of these classes in their present deplorable condition is a menace to the power and influence of the Hindu community. The line of argument adopted by our Muslim friends and also by some missionary critics of the Reform Scheme,¹⁵ ought to open the eyes of the Hindus to the absolute necessity and urgency of raising the social status of their fellow-religionists, called and known as the members of the depressed classes. Thus from every point of view, whether that of humanity, justice or fairplay, or that of self-interest, it is the bounden duty of the so called high-caste Hindus to give a helping hand to their brothers of the “low castes” and raise them socially as well as intellectually. We are living in a democratic age. The tendencies of democracy are towards the leveling down of all inequalities.

[From Lajpat Rai, *Writings and Speeches*, 1:166–167.]

ADDRESSING THE BRITISH PUBLIC

From 1914 to 1919, Lajpat Rai was outside India, in England and the United States, working for his country's cause. While in London he addressed the following letter to the editor of *The Daily News and Leader*, and it was published on June 7, 1914. The refusal of Canadian authorities to allow entry to Sikhs in Vancouver in 1914 created a stir among Indians throughout the British Empire.

A GREATER MEASURE OF SELF-GOVERNMENT

Sir,—I wonder if Englishmen at home realise the full significance of the attempt of the Hindus aboard the *Kamagata Maru* to enter Western Columbia in exercise of their rights of British citizenship. . . . These Hindus are Sikhs, the descendants,

compatriots and co-religionists of those who saved His Majesty's Eastern Empire in the time of England's greatest peril in India, viz, in 1857.

But for the loyalty and the bravery of the Sikhs, one shudders to think what the fate of the Empire would have been. Possibly, nay, probably that Empire would have been lost. Then the Sikhs have shed their blood for the Empire in Egypt, in the Soudan, in China, in Abyssinia, and in Burmah, and it is from their ranks that a considerable part of His Majesty's Indian Army is recruited. Some of your best generals have called them the "flower" of the Indian Army. They have been and are believed to be above the taint of sedition, and any educated Indian supposed to be agitating among them receives the severest (sometimes the most summary) punishment which is in the power of the Government of India to inflict. The mere suspicion of such a thing as agitation among the Sikhs raises the direct anger of the British Official in the Punjab, and justifies the harshest measures of repression, such as were adopted in 1907. Yet here we are on the threshold of a great agitation among the Sikhs, the responsibility of which cannot be traced, even by a stretch of imagination, to any "agitator."

The fact is that the British Government in India is on the horns of a dilemma. They want the Indians to believe that they are the equal subjects of the King, but when the former claim their rights as such, they behave as if they have neither the power nor the desire to secure the same for them. Perhaps it is not so much the fault of the Government in India as of those statesmen who have to reconcile their professions and principles of Liberalism with their policy of subjection. There is no half-way house between democracy and despotism. So long as India is governed from Whitehall and is not free to retaliate, the difficulty with which the Government is face to face in Canada will not be removed. The desire, the ambition, and the necessity of claiming the rights of British citizenship is no longer confined to educated Indians, but is permeating through the uneducated classes and even the masses.

The unlimited competition of the foreigner in the trade and service markets of India leaves them no other choice. The Indian labourer has so far been exploited for the benefit of the British Colonies under the most degrading and humiliating conditions. . . . At home his wages are despicable, and he can hardly live a decent life on those wages. Even the Government sweats him; when permanently employed in Government offices his wages ordinarily ranged from 2s, a week to 4s, or 5s, a week. When skilled and educated, he finds that most of the good places are held by the foreigner. Every riff raff of a European, not to speak of British Colonials, has free admittance into India, and a large number of German, Italian, French, and American mechanics and engineers find employment in Government establishments and industrial concerns, while a great many skilled Indians, some of them educated in the best technical institutions in India, England, and America remain unemployed, or have to be contented with very inferior positions. He thus suffers doubly. His country is open to the competition of the whole world, while he is debarred from admittance even into parts of the British dominions. Is it a wonder that he has begun to complain

that if he had a Government of his own at his back, the world would not treat him thus? . . .

To my mind, the remedy lies in giving a greater measure of self-government to India, with full powers of excluding foreign labour to the same extent and in the same way as the other parts of his Majesty's dominions do. Short of this, nothing is likely to avail much, and the trouble may continue to grow and embarrass both the Government and the Indian patriot. . . .

The spectacle of 400 Sikhs taking to hunger strike in British Canadian waters is fraught with serious consequences, and is likely to have the most disastrous effect on Sikh loyalty. . . . The retired Sikh soldiers already settled in Canada are also suffering under certain disabilities, the most important of which is imposed by the so-called "Continuation-journey Clause," which affectually debar their wives and children from entering Canada.

It is time, I think, for British statesmen to apply their minds seriously to the solution of the problem, or else the trouble may grow in gravity, and then it will be futile to blame the poor "agitator" for the consequences thereof.

[From Lala Lajpat Rai, *The Story of My Life: An Unknown Fragment*, ed. Joginder Singh Dhanki (New Delhi: Gitanjali Prakashan, 1978), 82–84.]

WHY INDIA IS IN REVOLT AGAINST BRITISH RULE

While in New York in 1916, Lajpat Rai published this pamphlet both in the United States and in Great Britain.

Many Englishman are asking to-day, why in peace-loving India insurrection is extending now all over the country, while Britain is fighting for her very existence? Grievances, true, she has had many, but she of all countries should have remained true to her past ideals and been chivalrous enough not to have attacked England from her back.

Yes, if England would have practised what she has been preaching! Many an Indian in the beginning of the war listened to that sophistic argument and learned to his bitter experience it was but another tyrant's pretext. Perfidious Albion¹⁶ puts on a pious holy cloak and appeals to India's sense of religious honour, so that she lets slip this golden opportunity offered by the present European war. . . . The hour has struck and destiny has decreed that India shall no longer be deceived and the disintegration of the British Empire, based on treachery, perfidy and tyranny, is but the question of a day.

England has filled her cup to its bitterest full, and like auto-intoxication, she is dying by her own hands. Whirlwind she has sown and must reap her harvest. This is the immutable law of *Karma*. Her tyranny and hypocrisy have generated the poison, and by its virulent toxin she has sealed her own doom. Mystic and peace-loving India has learned to hate England with that religious fervour and passion which transcends the soul and in which remains the only exquisite delight of revenge. To see England but humiliated and crushed would be as if to

ascend the gates of heaven, and on her brow the stigma of slavery—as she has robbed others of their liberty, so she feels its pathos and pains for her own retribution. . . . The iron chains of slavery that bound them are being forged into the flaming sword of liberty and freedom.

Call it madness, if you please, or havoc of oriental emotionalism, for the unarmed masses to rise against modern artillery. But what else could they do? To cherish revenge only in heart, when seeing the country robbed and outraged by the worst kind of legalized piracy, and the best leaders, the hopes of the future, dragged into the dungeons;—to live that life of lingering torture, degradation and shame without a manly protest, would be a living grave. . . .

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, the English statesmen cleverly used to keep before the Indian people that if there were any revolution in India and the English power withdraw[n], the people would be trampled under the Russian heel; and the Indian people, though they had never any love or loyalty for the English, [would] choose . . . [the] lesser evil.

But this time India is disenchanted. The bog of German invasion and oppression has had quite a different effect. The people took it at its worth. Those who were not convinced before, became finally convinced—what hypocrites the English could be. An honest enemy is more preferable than a seeming friend, with the hidden danger of a cut-throat, a serpent hidden in a flower.

England plunges into this world-war to defend the liberty of Belgium; her heart bleeds for the sufferings of its people—for its outraged women and oppressed children. India, the land of romance and chivalry, should help England with men and money, in her splendid mission to restore liberty in Europe and erect high again the temples of gods, sacrilegied by the German Barbarians. This appeal to these heathens for the defence of the Christian temples first thrilled the imagination of many, and many a heroic son responded. . . . But soon they found out, it was another dirty but old and clever game of England. India has been fooled again, but England has lost for ever her magic spell over India.

Many went to fight England's battles in Europe. Very few returned; but those who returned told quite a different story. The soldiers of the past generation have been brought up with the conviction, from the memory of the first revolution of 1857, that the English are invincible as long as they hold the mastery of the sea, and better trained in science and organization than any other people. But their personal experience and observation shattered their old belief. They found the Germans were superior to the English in everything—in trained knowledge and efficient organization—both in land and sea. . . .

And India could not be worse off under any other administration. Of course, India wants to be free from any foreign control, and she needs only a breathing space of time to recuperate her energy and the secret strength that will be necessary to drive out the English, would be sufficient to maintain the internal peace and defend the country against any foreign aggression. . . .

No wonder the English are regarded as the white devils all over Asia, and have raised prejudice against all Europeans. Even the missionaries are suspected. Divide and rule is her nefarious policy. Intrigue and treachery are her formidable weapons.

No—India does not tremble at the imaginary fear of German invasion. That is not our immediate concern, but only a metaphysical problem. What we are suffering from is British oppression and we need to get rid of it. Whoever hurts England and weakens her, adds to our strength and is our friend. So India rejoices at Germany's success and every shot of her victorious guns sends a joyous thrill all over Asia. . . .

What hypocrisy! England should be the only one to enjoy unmolested the spoils of her robbery, and any rival must be blackmailed. The veil is too thin even for the unsophisticated, and whom does England expect to fool . . . ?

[From Lajpat Rai, *Story of My Life*, 90–95.]

RABINDRANATH TAGORE: POET, EDUCATOR, AND INDIA'S AMBASSADOR TO THE WORLD

The fourteenth of Maharshi Debendranath Tagore's fifteen children, Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) grew to manhood in a highly cultured family environment. A number of his brothers and sisters were artistically inclined—one composed music, another staged amateur theatricals, and several contributed to the literary magazine edited by their eldest brother, who was also a philosopher. The venerable Debendranath gave special attention to his youngest son's education and, after investing him with the brahmanical sacred thread, took him on an extended pilgrimage to Amritsar and the Himalayas. Rabindranath's religious views were decisively shaped by his father's influence.

A steady income from the family's landed estates freed Rabindranath of the necessity of earning his own livelihood, and he was allowed to give up formal studies at the age of thirteen, but private tutors were employed to teach him any subject he desired to learn. Living at home, he began to experiment with writing verse. Encouraged by his older siblings, he went on to win renown at twenty with his first volume of Bengali poems—Bankim Chandra Chatterji himself hailed their appearance. Year after year his writing matured in style and grew richer in content. Translating into English some of the devotional poems written after the death of his wife and three of his five children, he published in 1912 the collection entitled *Gitanjali* (*Song Offerings*) with some editorial assistance from the art critic William Rothenstein and the poet W. B. Yeats. A year later the world was startled to hear that he had been awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. Educated India went wild with excitement, sensing that Rabindranath had vindicated Indian culture in the eyes of the West. As for the poet himself, he is said to have cried, "I shall never have any peace again."¹⁷

Although his prediction proved correct, the ceaseless activity in which he spent the rest of his life was mostly of his own making. He had already founded a school at

Shantiniketan, the rural retreat where his father used to pass days in meditation. He now began to develop there a center of Asian culture, where all the creative and performing arts could thrive in a new birth. In 1921, as a crowning step in his educational work, Tagore opened his Vishva-Bharati¹⁸ University at Shantiniketan, dedicating it to his ideal of world brotherhood and cultural interchange.

Like his father, Rabindranath loved to travel, and he seldom refused the many invitations that came to him from all parts of the world. In addition to many tours within India, he lectured on five occasions in the United States, five times in Europe, three times in Japan, and once each in China, South America, Soviet Russia, and Southeast Asia. He made good use of his opportunities to address important audiences by denouncing—especially after the First World War—the evils of nationalism and materialism. Mankind could only save itself from destruction, he declared, by a return to the spiritual values that permeate all religions. Asia, the home of the world's great faiths, lay under a special obligation to lead this religious revival, and to India, the home of both Hinduism and Buddhism, belonged the mission of reawakening herself, Asia, and the world. Although this message, like that of Vivekananda, stressed India's role as spiritual teacher to mankind, Tagore never tired of reminding his countrymen that they also needed to learn from the West's vitality and dedicated search for truth.

Through an irony of fate, this preacher of the complementary relationship between Asian and Western cultures returned from a triumphant European tour in 1921 to find Gandhi leading a mass movement of non-cooperation with every aspect of British influence in India, including the prevailing form of English education. Rabindranath publicly opposed Gandhi and was accordingly accused of taking an "unpatriotic" position. He had already been virtually ostracized for his withdrawal in 1908 from Bengal politics in disgust at the extremist violence of the anti-partition agitation. On both occasions he bore his isolation stoically and without yielding his ground, much like the great Bengali he considered his spiritual kinsman—Rammohan Roy. Although the intellectual gulf between Tagore and Gandhi was never bridged, the two remained friends and visited one another—most dramatically in 1932, when Tagore sat by the bedside of Gandhi as the latter ended his fast against separating the Untouchables from the main body of the Hindu electorate. When he visited Shantiniketan after the poet's death, Gandhi remarked, "I started with a disposition to detect a conflict between Gurudev ["the godlike teacher," as Tagore's disciples called him] and myself, but ended with the glorious discovery that there was none."¹⁹

Jawaharlal Nehru, who admired both men greatly (perhaps because they served as models for the two sides of his own personality), once wrote: "Tagore was primarily the man of thought, Gandhi of concentrated and ceaseless activity. Both, in their different ways, had a world outlook, and both were at the same time wholly Indian."²⁰

Shy and aloof, Tagore was able to look more dispassionately on the events of his time than could those who hurled themselves into the struggle against British rule. Reversing Tilak's dictum that social reform diverted and divided the movement for independence, Tagore held (as did Gandhi) that the clamor for political rights dis-

tracted men from more fundamental tasks such as erasing caste barriers, reconciling Hindus and Muslims, uplifting the poor and helpless villagers, and liberating men's minds and bodies from a host of self-made and unnecessary burdens.

Right down to his eightieth year, Tagore never lost his childlike wonder at the variety and beauty of creation, and he expressed his delight with life in a ceaseless outpouring of poetry, prose, drama, and song. By making the speech of the common people the medium for his masterly style, he revolutionized and revitalized Bengali literature. His interests, although basically aesthetic, were truly universal: in his seventies, he wrote a textbook on elementary science that explained the theory of relativity and the working of the solar system. In an age of growing xenophobia he sought to keep India's windows open. For his creativity, his breadth of vision, and his zeal in championing man's freedom from arbitrary restraints—whether social, political, or religious—Tagore deserves comparison with the great artists and thinkers of Renaissance Europe.

“*THE EXERCISE BOOK*”

Although Tagore wrote poems and plays from his teenage years onward, in his thirties, after the experiences he had had and the observations he made while helping his father run his estates in east Bengal, Tagore wrote many of his wonderful short stories. The following one, published in 1891, shows his sensitivity to the problems women faced in Indian society.

As soon as she learnt to write, Uma caused tremendous trouble. She would write “Rain patters, leaves flutter” on every wall of the house with a piece of coal—in great, childish, curving letters. She found the copy of *The Secret Adventures of Haridas* that her elder brother's wife kept beneath her pillow and wrote in pencil, “Black water, red flower.” Most of the stars and planets in the new almanac that everyone in the house used were, so to speak, eclipsed by her huge scribbles. In her father's daily account-book, in the middle of his calculations, she wrote:

He who learns to write
Drives a horse and cart.

Up to now she had not been interrupted in these literary endeavours; but at last she met with a dire mishap.

Uma's elder brother Gobindalal had a very benign look about him, but he wrote perpetually for the newspapers. None of his friends or relatives supposed from his conversation that he was a thinker, and indeed one could not justly accuse him of thinking on any subject. Nevertheless he wrote—and his opinions were in tune with most readers in Bengal. He had recently, for example, completed an elegant essay demolishing—by the spirit of his attack and the exuberance of his language rather than by logic—some gravely false ideas about anatomy that were current in European science.

In the quiet of the afternoon, Uma took her brother's pen and ink and wrote on the essay in bold letters:

So well-behaved is young Gopal
Whatever you give he eats it all.²¹

I don't believe she meant this to be a dig at the readers of Gobindalal's essay, but he was beside himself with rage. First he smacked Uma; then he took away her pencil-stub, her ink-smeared blunted pen and all her other carefully accumulated writing implements. The little girl, quite unable to understand the reason for such disgrace, sat in a corner and cried her heart out.

When her punishment was finished, Gobindalal softened a little. He returned the confiscated items, and tried to dispel the little girl's distress by giving her a well-bound, nicely ruled exercise-book.

Uma was seven years old at the time. From then on, this exercise-book was under her pillow every night, and in her lap or under her arm all day long. When with her hair plaited Uma was taken along by the maid to the girls' school in the village, the exercise-book went too. Some of the girls were intrigued by the book, some coveted it, and some begrudged her it.

In the first year that she had the exercise-book, she neatly wrote in it: "Birds are singing, Night is ending."²² She would sit on the floor of her bedroom embracing the exercise-book, chanting out loud and writing. She accumulated many snatches of prose and rhyme in this way.

In the second year, she wrote some things of her own: very short but very much to the point: no introduction or conclusion. For example, at the end of "The Tiger and the Crane"—a story in *kathāmālā*²³—a line was added which is not to be found in that book or anywhere else in Bengali literature. It was this: "I love Yashi very much."

Let no one suppose that I am about to concoct a love-story! Yashi was not an eleven- or twelve-year-old local boy: she was an old house-servant, whose actual name was Yashoda. But this one sentence should not be taken as firm proof of Uma's feelings towards her. Anyone wanting to write an honest account of the matter would find that the sentence was fully contradicted two pages later in the exercise-book.

This was not just a stray example: there were blatant contradictions in Uma's writings at every step. In one place one could read of her life-long rift with Hari (not Hari meaning Krishna, but a girl at school called Haridashi). But something a few lines below suggested there was no one in the world whom she loved more than Hari.

The next year, when Uma was nine years old, a *sānāi*²⁴ began to play one morning. It was her wedding-day. The groom was called Pyarimohan, one of Gobindalal's fellow-writers. Although he was still quite young and had acquired some education, modern ideas had not penetrated him at all. He was therefore

the darling of the neighbourhood. Gobindalal adopted him as a model, though not with complete success.

Dressed in a Benares sari, her little face covered with a veil, Uma left tearfully for her father-in-law's house. Her mother said, "Do what your mother-in-law tells you, my dear. Do the housework, don't spend your time reading and writing." And Gobindalal said, "Mind that you don't go scratching on walls; it's not that sort of house. And make sure you don't scrawl on any of Pyarimohan's writings." Uma's heart trembled. She realized there would be no mercy in the house where she was going; she would have to learn after endless scoldings what things were regarded there as mistakes and faults.

The *sānāi* sounded on that day too, but I doubt if anyone in that crowd of wedding-guests really understood what the girl felt in her trembling heart, behind her veil, Benares sari and ornaments.

Yashi went along with Uma. She was supposed to settle her into her in-laws' house, then leave her there. The tender-hearted Yashi, after much reflection, took Uma's exercise-book along too. The book was a piece of her parental home: a much-loved memento of her short residence in the house of her birth; a brief record of parental affection, written in round childish letters. It gave her, in the midst of domestic duties that had come too early, a taste of the cherished freedom that is a young girl's due.

For the first few days that she was in her in-laws' house she did not write anything—she had no time. But the time came for Yashi to return; and on the day that she left, Uma shut the door of her bedroom at midday, took her exercise-book out of her tin box, and tearfully wrote: "Yashi has gone home, I shall go back to Mother too."

Nowadays she had no leisure in which to copy out passages from *Easy Reader* or *The Dawn of Understanding*; maybe she had no inclination either. So there were no long passages dividing her own childish writings. Below the sentence mentioned above was written: "If only *Dādā* [elder brother] could take me home again, I would never spoil his writings again."

Word had it that Uma's father sometimes tried to invite her home for a bit; but Gobindalal and Pyarimohan joined forces to prevent this. Gobindalal said that now was the time to learn her duties towards her husband: bringing her back to the old atmosphere of affection would disturb her quite unnecessarily. He wrote such a shrewd and witty essay on the subject, that his like-minded readers could not but agree. Uma got wind of what was happening, and wrote in her exercise-book: "*Dādā*, I beg you, take me home again just once—I promise not to annoy you."

One day she was in her room with the door closed, writing something similarly pointless. Her sister-in-law Tilakmanjari, who was very inquisitive, decided she must find out what Uma got up to behind her closed door. When she peeped through a crack and saw her writing, she was amazed: the Goddess of Learning [Sarasvatī] had never before made so secret a visitation to the female

quarters of the house. Her younger sister Kanakmanjari came and peeped too; and her youngest sister Anangamanjari—precariously standing on tiptoe to peer at the mysteries within.

Uma, as she wrote, suddenly heard three familiar voices giggling outside the room. Realizing what was afoot, she hastily shut the exercise-book in her box and buried her face in the bedclothes.

Pyarimohan was most perturbed when he was told about what had been seen. Reading and writing, once started, would lead to play- and novel-writing, and household norms would be endangered. As he thought further about the matter, he worked out a most subtle theory. Perfect marriage was produced by a combination of female and male power. But if through women's education female power was weakened, then male power would prevail unchecked; and the clash between male and male would be so destructive that marriage would be annihilated, and women would be widowed. As yet, no one had been able to challenge this theory.

That evening Pyarimohan came to Uma's room and gave her a thorough scolding, and ridiculed her too, saying: "So the wife wants to go to an office with a pen behind her ear? We'll have to get her a *śāmlā* [an official turban]!" Uma could not understand what he meant. She had never read his articles, so she hadn't learnt to appreciate his wit. But she was deeply humiliated, and wished that the earth would swallow her up.

For a long time after she wrote nothing. But one autumn morning she heard a beggar-woman singing an *āgamanī* song.²⁵ She listened quietly, resting her chin on the bars of the window. The autumn sunshine brought back so many memories of childhood; hearing an *āgamanī* song as well was too much to bear.

Uma could not sing; but ever since she learnt how to write, her habit had been to write down songs, to make up for not being able to sing them. This was what the beggar-woman sang that day:

The citizens say to Uma's mother,
 "Your lost star has returned."
 The Queen runs, madly weeping,
 "Where is Uma, tell me?
 My Uma has returned—
 Come, my darling,
 Let me clasp you to me!"
 Stretching her arms,
 Hugging her mother's neck,
 Uma chides her, sore at heart:
 "Why did you not send for me?"

With the same soreness of heart, Uma's eyes filled with tears. She furtively called the singer over and, shutting the door of her room, began to make a strangely spelt copy of the song in her exercise-book.

Tilakmanjari, Kanakmanjari and Anangamanjari saw this through the crack in the door and shouted out, clapping their hands: “*Baudidi* [sister-in-law], we’ve seen everything, *Baudidi*!” Uma opened the door and said in great distress, “Dear sisters, don’t tell anyone, please, I beg you. I won’t do it again, I won’t write again.” Then she saw that Tilakmanjari had her eye on the exercise-book. She ran over to it and clasped it to her breast. Her sisters-in-law struggled to snatch it from her; failing to do so, Ananga called her brother.

Pyarimohan came and sat down on the bed sternly. “Give me that book,” he thundered. When his command was not obeyed, he growled in an even deeper voice, “Give it to me.”

The girl held the exercise-book to her breast and looked at her husband, entreating him with her gaze. When she saw that Pyarimohan was about to force it from her, she hurled it down, covered her face with her hands, and fell to the floor.

Pyarimohan picked up the exercise-book and loudly read out from her childish writings. As she listened, Uma tried to clutch the nethermost depths of the earth. The other girls collapsed into peals of laughter.

Uma never got the exercise-book back again. Pyarimohan also had an exercise-book full of various subtly barbed essays, but no one was philanthropic enough to snatch *his* book away and destroy it.

[From “The Exercise Book,” in Tagore, *Selected Short Stories*, trans. William Radice, rev. ed. (London: Penguin, 1994), 140–145.]

TAGORE’S CONGRESS “PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS”

It was only during the swadeshi period in the early 1900s that Tagore involved himself directly in politics, and in 1908 he gave the presidential address at the Pabna session of the Bengal Provincial Conference—the first time the president spoke in Bengali. He presented his ideas for rebuilding Indian society with the help of selfless young men and Indian villagers. His words anticipate his efforts in Sriniketan, which was established as a rural reconstruction center in 1922.

How then should we set about building our programme of work? The higher a tower, the broader must be its foundation. If we desire to build an edifice that will reflect our national aspirations, we must work up from each and every district to a representative body for each province. These Provincial Conferences should establish branch organizations in every village and begin with the collection of all possible information about every part of the province. This is necessary as precise knowledge must precede all efficient work.

Our aim must be to restore to the villages the power to meet their own requirements. We should combine a number of villages to form a regional unit. Self-government will become real only if the leaders of these units can make them self-reliant and capable of coping with the needs of their component villages. They must have their own schools, workshops and granaries, their own

co-operative stores and banks which they should be assisted to found and taught to maintain. Each community unit should have its common meeting place for work and play where its appointed headmen may hear and settle local disputes and differences.

As long as the landowner and the tiller go each his separate way, neither can thrive. All over the world, men are forming unions to mobilize strength. Whoever remains isolated in the modern world is bound to remain enslaved and a hewer of wood. Unless we unite to build an embankment by our joint effort, the results of our labour will, like trickles of water, slide down hill-slopes to fill alien reservoirs. We shall then produce food for others and ourselves starve and not even know why this is so. We must therefore first bring together those whom we wish to serve.

Many labour-saving appliances have been invented in Europe but the smallness of our holdings and our lack of resources make them almost useless for us. If the farmers in a village or, better still, in a community unit combined and engaged in joint cultivation of their land on a co-operative basis, they could all profit by the use of these modern machines which would reduce expenditure and give larger yields. It is economical for them to buy even an expensive machine if all the sugar-cane in the village is crushed by it. They can afford to have a Jute Press in the village if the produce of all the fields and homesteads is brought to a common centre. There would be an improvement in animal husbandry if all the milkmen in the village combined. Similarly, weavers in the village can indent for improved powerlooms if they pool their resources and work on a co-operative basis.

We all know the threat of degradation which labourers face when they migrate to town to work in the factories set up by capitalists. This danger is specially strong in a country like ours where society is based entirely on the home. If domestic life is once disturbed, one of the main supports of religion will disappear and evils accumulate in the heart of the community. If large factories are established in India and like whirlpools draw into their vortex the poor villagers, if they employ large numbers of displaced people in the joyless and mechanical work of tending machines, we can easily imagine the degradation which may overtake these men and women. No society can endure if human values are wasted in order to increase the production of goods by the use of the machine. . . .

As the mills are killing our handicrafts, so is the all-pervading machinery of an alien government destroying our simple old village organizations. The results are invariably good when a small-scale unit expands with the increase in our demands, provided this is a natural development. The village organizations we had may have been small but they were . . . ours. What the British have set up may be grand but they do not belong to us. They not only make us passive but fail to satisfy our needs adequately. It will never do if we seek to use somebody else's eyes because we have lost our own. . . .

No food, no health, no joy, no hope, no man to help his neighbour. When the blow falls, we accept it with bowed heads. When death threatens, we surrender without a struggle. When justice is denied, we blame our evil star. If neighbours are in trouble, we leave them to Providence. It is because of the canker at the root that it is so with us. The soil which is to sustain life has dried up. The village community, which is the mother of nations and supports national endeavour, has been disrupted and is now moribund. Its life-giving institutions are uprooted and are floating like dead logs down the river of time. . . .

A simple test will indicate that our national consciousness is not spread uniformly throughout the community. Our sensitivity is confined to the towns and even there to a particular segment of society. The Swadeshi movement was initiated by the urban educated classes, even if on the whole not they but the villagers have had to pay the price. . . . But why do we not all share in this burden that is crushing the poor villager? Why do we not feel the pain in our hearts and by sharing common woes achieve equality in suffering? If it is a crime to propagate the cult of *swadeshi*, then we are all equally guilty. If we all join in sharing its weight, it will cease to be a burden. . . .

Even God cannot guarantee that justice will always be done to the weak and the undeserving. Why then do we persist in vainly seeking justice from the administration or the Parliament? Good intentions are irrelevant in this context. . . .

We must also realize that it is against the present-day policy of our rulers to attempt to strengthen their subjects. The very man who, in the exercise of his judicial functions on the Police Commission declared the police guilty, in his administrative capacity finds it necessary to protest in tearful tones against the slightest check to their irresponsible power. He is perhaps afraid that if the subjects gain in strength, they may prove too strong for him as well. . . .

And finally, let the blessings of the motherland be showered on you, devoted young men, who have regardless of all risks volunteered in the country's cause. You have been the first to rise with the flush of dawn and to endure the conflicts and hardship of the day's work. Your awakening manliness has spoken not only in the thunder of battle but also in bountiful showers that have poured upon the thirsty land. Those who have been down-trodden, despised and callous to insults, unaccustomed to any consideration except from members of their own family and oblivious even of their rights as men, have today learnt because of you what human brotherhood means. . . .

I hail you today as messengers of love sent by the Arbiter of India's destiny and bid you remember that consecration in the service of the country is not a momentary affair like the ceremonial bath on the occasion of a feast like the Ardhodaya.²⁶ The privations and terror suffered by India's helpless children are not confined to a particular time or place. Nor need you think that your endeavours alone, without an effort on their part, can save and protect them.

Teach them to be strong and to protect themselves, for that is the only way. Take, each of you, charge of one village and organize it. Educate the villagers and initiate new programmes of agriculture and production in the villages. Put new heart into the people so that they can build for themselves clean, healthy and beautiful homes. Teach them the value of co-operative action so that they may put forward their united strength and meet their social obligations. Do not expect fame or praise in the undertaking. Instead, be prepared for opposition and distrust rather than gratitude from those for whom you would give your life. There will be no excitement, conflict or ostentation in this programme of work. It will need patience, love and silent striving, but let one single-minded resolution sustain you in all your work: the resolve that you will make it your life's mission to share in the sufferings of those who are the most afflicted in the land and through participation in their sorrows find remedies that will destroy the very roots of their misery.

If our Provincial Conference undertakes the responsibility of establishing such bodies in every district, and if these district organizations spread out to every village, then and then alone shall we have a real claim to our motherland. Then alone will the Congress be fed with living blood from every part of the country through numberless arteries and become the throbbing heart of India and the symbol of its vital unity.

[From R. Tagore, *Towards Universal Man*
(London: Asia Publishing House, 1961), 118–126.]

“THE PROBLEM OF INDIA”

This statement, in the form of a letter addressed to an American lawyer, Myron H. Phelps, who was sympathetic to India, was written in response to a request for information and help in assisting the cause of nationalist India. It presents Tagore's long view of Indian civilizations, and compares India's dilemmas to those of other nations, stressing its unique solutions and gifts.

Shantiniketan, West Bengal, 4 January 1909

My dear Sir,

. . . One need not dive deep, it seems to me, to discover the problem of India; it is so plainly evident on the surface. Our country is divided by numberless differences—physical, social, linguistic, religious; and this obvious fact must be taken into account in any course which is destined to lead us into our own place among the nations who are building up the history of man. The trite maxim “History repeats itself” is like most other sayings but half the truth. The conditions which have prevailed in India from a remote antiquity have guided its history along a particular channel, which does not and cannot coincide with the lines of evolution taken

by other countries under different sets of influences. It would be a sad misreading of the lessons of the past to apply our energies to tread too closely in the footsteps of any other nation, however successful in its own career. I feel strongly that our country has been entrusted with a message which is not a mere echo of the living voices that resound from western shores, and to be true to her trust she must realize the divine purpose that has been manifest throughout her history. . . .

It has ever been India's lot to accept alien races as factors in her civilization. You know very well how the caste that proceeds from colour takes elsewhere a most virulent form. I need not cite modern instances of the animosity which divides white men from negroes in your own country, and excludes Asiatics from European colonies. When, however, the white-skinned Aryans on encountering the dark aboriginal races of India found themselves face to face with the same problem, the solution of which was either extermination, as has happened in America and Australia, or a modification in the social system of the superior race calculated to accommodate the inferior without the possibility of either friction or fusion, they chose the latter. Now the principle underlying this choice obviously involves mechanical arrangement and juxtaposition, not cohesion and amalgamation. By making very careful provision for the differences, it keeps them ever alive. Unfortunately, the principle once accepted inevitably grows deeper and deeper into the constitution of the race even after the stress of the original necessity ceases to exist.

Thus secure in her rigid system of seclusion, in the very process of inclusion, India in different periods of her history received with open arms the medley of races that poured in on her without any attempt at shutting out undesirable elements. I need not dwell at length on the evils of the resulting caste system. It cannot be denied, and this is a fact which foreign onlookers too often overlook, that it served a very useful purpose in its day and has been even up to a late age of immense protective benefit to India. It has largely contributed to the freedom from narrowness and intolerance which distinguishes the Hindu religion and has enabled races with widely different culture and even antagonistic social and religious usages and ideals to settle down peaceably side by side—a phenomenon which cannot fail to astonish Europeans, who, with comparatively less jarring elements, have struggled for ages to establish peace and harmony among themselves. But this very absence of struggle, developing into a ready acquiescence in any position assigned by the social system, has crushed individual manhood and has accustomed us for centuries not only to submit to every form of domination, but sometimes actually to venerate the power that holds us down. The assignment of the business of government almost entirely to the military class reacted upon the whole social organism by permanently excluding the rest of the people from all political

cooperation, so that now it is hardly surprising to find the almost entire absence of any feeling of common interest, any sense of national responsibility, in the general consciousness of a people of whom as a whole it has seldom been any part of their pride, their honour, their dharma, to take thought or stand up for their country. This completeness of stratification, this utter submergence of the lower by the higher, this immutable and all-pervading system, has no doubt imposed a mechanical uniformity upon the people but has at the same time kept their different sections inflexibly and unalterably separate, with the consequent loss of all power of adaptation and readjustment to new conditions and forces. The regeneration of the Indian people, to my mind, directly and perhaps solely depends upon the removal of this condition. Whenever I realize the hypnotic hold which this gigantic system of cold-blooded repression has taken on the minds of our people whose social body it has so completely entwined in its endless coils that the free expression of manhood even under the direst necessity has become almost an impossibility, the only remedy that suggests itself to me and which even at the risk of uttering a truism I cannot but repeat, is—to educate them out of their trance.

I know I shall be told that foreign dominion is also one of the things not conducive to the free growth of manhood. But it must be remembered that with us foreign dominion is not an excrescence the forcible extirpation of which will restore a condition of normal health and vigour. It has manifested itself as a political symptom of our social disease, and at present it has become necessary to us for effecting the dispersal of all internal obstructive agencies. For we have now come under the domination not of a dead system, but of a living power, which, while holding us under subjection, cannot fail to impart to us some of its own life. This vivifying warmth from outside is gradually making us conscious of our own vitality and the newly awakened life is making its way slowly, but surely, even through the barriers of caste. . . .

But here in India are working deep-seated social forces, complex internal reactions, for in no other country under the sun has such a juxtaposition of races, ideas and religions occurred; and the great problem which from time immemorial India has undertaken to solve is what . . . may be called the race problem. At the sacrifice of her own political welfare she has through long ages borne this great burden of heterogeneity, patiently working all the time to evolve out of these warring contradictions a great synthesis. . . .

For us, there can be no question of blind revolution, but of steady and purposeful education. . . . Must we not have that greater vision of humanity which will impel us to shake off the fetters that shackle our individual life before we begin to dream of national freedom?

It must be kept in mind, however, that there never has been a time when India completely lost sight of the need of such reformation. . . . All the illustrious names of our country have been of those who came to bridge over the differences of colours and scriptures and to recognize all that is highest and best as the common heritage of humanity. Such have been our emperors Asoka and Akbar, our philosophers Shankara and Ramanuja, our spiritual masters Kabir, Nanak, Chaitanya and others not less glorious because knit closer to us in time and perspective. They belong to various sects and castes, some of them of the very “lowest,” but still they occupy the ever-sacred seat of the guru, which is the greatest honour that India confers on her children. This shows that even in the darkest of her days the consciousness of her true power and purpose has never forsaken her.

The present unrest in India of which various accounts must have reached you is to me one of the most hopeful signs of the times. Different causes are assigned and remedies proposed by those whose spheres of activity necessarily lead them to a narrow and one-sided view of the situation. . . . We have also begun vaguely to realize the failure of England to rise to the great occasion, and to miss more and more the invaluable cooperation which it was so clearly England’s mission to offer. And so we are troubled with a trouble which we know not yet how to name. How England can best be made to perceive that the mere establishment of the *Pax Britannica* cannot either justify or make possible her continued dominion, I have no idea; but . . . I am sure that the sooner we come to our senses, and take up the broken thread of our appointed task, the earlier will come the final consummation.

[From *Rabindranath Tagore: An Anthology*, ed. Krishna Dutta and Andrew Robinson (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1977), 236–242.]

WHERE THE MIND IS WITHOUT FEAR

In one of the hundred-odd poems that comprise his 1912 volume *Gitanjali*, Tagore listed in a rising crescendo his ambitions for his native land. As with all English translations of his poetry (including those he did himself), much of the beauty of the original Bengali is lost here.

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by
 narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary
desert sand of dead habit;

Where the mind is led forward by thee into everwidening
thought and action—

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

[From Tagore, *Collected Poems and Plays*, 16.]

THE RENUNCIATION OF RENUNCIATION

In the following short selections, we hear Tagore express his renunciation of the ancient yogic traditions of gradual withdrawal from the delights (and pains) of the senses; he also urges his countrymen to abandon the related theory that the world our senses gives us knowledge of is *māyā* (illusion).

Deliverance is not for me in renunciation. I feel the embrace of
freedom in a thousands bonds of delight.

Thou ever pourest for me the fresh draught of thy wine of various
colors and fragrance, filling this earthen vessel to the brim.

My world will light its hundred different lamps with thy flame and
place them before the altar of thy temple.

No, I will never shut the doors of my senses. The delights of sight
and hearing and touch will bear thy delight.

Yes, all my illusions will burn into illumination of joy, and all my
desires ripen into fruits of love.

[From Tagore, *Gitanjali*, trans. in Amiya Chakravarty, ed.,
A Tagore Reader (New York: Macmillan, 1961), 305.]

Alas, my cheerless country, dressed in worn-out rags, loaded with decrepit wisdom, you pride yourself on your subtlety in having seen through the fraud of creation. Sitting idly in your corner, all you do is to sharpen the edge of your metaphysical mumbo jumbo and dismiss as unreal this boundless, star-studded sky and this great, big earth whose lap has nurtured myriad forms of life, age after age. Millions of living beings make up the vast fair of this world and you, unbelieving dotard, ignore it all as a child's play.

[From Tagore, *Sonār Tarī* (*The Golden Boat*), trans. Krishna Kripalani,
in *Rabindranath Tagore: A Biography* (New York: Grove Press, 1962), 164.]

TO YONE NOGUCHI

Noguchi (1875–1947), a Japanese poet well known in the West in the early decades of the twentieth century, and a friend of Tagore, tried to enlist his support for Japan's militarism in China. Tagore, sensitive to imperialist violence whether done by Asians

or Europeans, responded frankly to Noguchi in a letter of September 1, 1938. Never constrained by nationalistic narrowness, Tagore expressed his concern for the Chinese people and his distaste for the direction the Japanese had taken.

Dear Noguchi,

I am profoundly surprised by the letter that you have written to me: neither its temper nor its contents harmonize with the spirit of Japan which I learnt to admire in your writings and came to love through my personal contacts with you. It is sad to think that the passion of collective militarism may on occasion helplessly overwhelm even the creative artist, that genuine intellectual power should be led to offer its dignity and truth to be sacrificed at the shrine of the dark gods of war.

You seem to agree with me in your condemnation of the massacre of Ethiopia by Fascist Italy but you would reserve the murderous attack on Chinese millions for judgement under a different category. But surely judgements are based on principle, and no amount of special pleading can change the fact that in launching a ravaging war on Chinese humanity, with all the deadly methods learnt from the West, Japan is infringing every moral principle on which civilization is based. You claim that Japan's situation is unique, forgetting that military situations are always unique, and that pious warlords, convinced of peculiarly individual justification for their atrocities have never failed to arrange for special alliances with divinity for annihilation and torture on a large scale.

Humanity, in spite of its many failures, has believed in a fundamental moral structure of society. When you speak, therefore, of "the inevitable means, terrible it is though, for establishing a new great world in the Asiatic continent"—signifying, I suppose, the bombing of Chinese women and children and the desecration of ancient temples and universities as a means of saving China for Asia—you are ascribing to humanity a way of life which is not even inevitable among the animals and would certainly not apply to the East, in spite of her occasional aberrations. You are building your conception of an Asia which would be raised on a tower of skulls. I have, as you rightly point out, believed in the message of Asia, but I never dreamt that this message could be identified with deeds which brought exaltation to the heart of Tamerlane at his terrible efficiency in manslaughter. When I protested against "westernization" in my lectures in Japan, I contrasted the rapacious imperialism which some of the *nations* of Europe were cultivating with the ideal of perfection preached by Buddha and Christ, with the great heritages of culture and good neighbourliness that went [in] to the making of Asiatic and other civilizations. I felt it to be my duty to warn the land of *bushido*, of great art and traditions of noble heroism, that this phase of scientific savagery which victimized western humanity and led their helpless masses to a moral cannibalism

was never to be imitated by a virile people who had entered upon a glorious renaissance and had every promise of a creative future before them. The doctrine of “Asia for Asia” which you enunciate in your letter, as an instrument of political blackmail, has all the virtues of the lesser Europe which I repudiate and nothing of the larger humanity that makes us one across the barriers of political labels and divisions. I was amused to read the recent statement of a Tokyo politician that the military alliance of Japan with Italy and Germany was made for “highly spiritual and moral reasons” and “had no materialistic considerations behind it.” Quite so. What is not amusing is that artists and thinkers should echo such remarkable sentiments that translate military swagger into spiritual bravado. . . .

“The betrayal of intellectuals” of which the great French writer spoke after the European war, is a dangerous symptom of our age. You speak of the savings of the poor people of Japan, their silent sacrifice and suffering and take pride in betraying that this pathetic sacrifice is being exploited for gun-running and invasion of a neighbour’s hearth and home, that human wealth of greatness is pillaged for inhuman purposes. Propaganda, I know, has been reduced to a fine art, and it is almost impossible for peoples in non-democratic countries to resist hourly doses of poison, but one had imagined that at least the men of intellect and imagination would themselves retain their gift of independent judgement. Evidently such is not always the case: behind sophisticated arguments seems to lie a mentality of perverted nationalism which makes the “intellectuals” of today go blustering about their “ideologies” dragooning their own “masses” into paths of dissolution. I have known your people and I hate to believe that they could deliberately participate in the organized drugging of Chinese men and women by opium and heroin, but they do not know. . . . Meanwhile, representatives of Japanese culture in China are busy practising their craft on the multitudes caught in the grip of an organization of wholesale human pollution. . . . From Japan there has come no protest, not even from her poets. . . .

I speak with utter sorrow for your people; your letter has hurt me to the depths of my being. I know that one day the disillusionment of your people will be complete, and through laborious centuries they will have to clear the debris of their civilization wrought to ruin by their own warlords run amok. . . . China is unconquerable, her civilization, under the dauntless leadership of Chiang Kai-shek, is displaying marvellous resources; the desperate loyalty of her peoples, united as never before, is creating a new age for that land. Caught unprepared by a gigantic machinery of war, hurled upon her peoples, China is holding her own; no temporary defeats can ever crush her fully aroused spirit. Faced by the borrowed science of

Japanese militarism which is crudely western in character, China's stand reveals an inherently superior moral stature. . . .

You do not realize that you are glorifying your neighbour at your own cost. But these are considerations on another plane: the sorrow remains that Japan, in the words of Madame Chiang Kai-shek which you must have read in the *Spectator*, is creating so many ghosts. Ghosts of immemorial works of Chinese art, of irreplaceable Chinese institutions, of great peace-loving communities drugged, tortured, and destroyed. "Who will lay the ghosts?" she asks. Japanese and Chinese people, let us hope, will join hands together, in no distant future, in wiping off memories of a bitter past. True Asian humanity will be reborn. Poets will raise their song and be unashamed, one believes, to declare their faith again in a human destiny which cannot admit of a scientific mass production of fratricide.

Yours sincerely,

Rabindranath Tagore

[From Dutta and Robinson, *Tagore*, 191–195.]

THE SUNSET OF THE CENTURY

Written in Bengali on the last day of the nineteenth century, this poem embodied Tagore's protest against the aggressive nationalism that brought on the Boer War. He implied that by patient cultivation of spiritual virtues, India and "the East" would take their proper place in world civilization after the militant power of Western nationalism had ended.

The last sun of the century sets amidst the blood-
red clouds of the West and the whirlwind of
hatred.

The naked passion of self-love of Nations, in its
drunken delirium of greed, is dancing to the
clash of steel and the howling verses of
vengeance.

The hungry self of the Nation shall burst in a
violence of fury from its own shameless
feeding.

For it has made the world its food.

And licking it, crunching it, and swallowing it in
big morsels,

It swells and swells,

Till in the midst of its unholy feast descends the
 sudden shaft of heaven piercing its heart of
 grossness.

The crimson glow of light on the horizon is not the
 light of thy dawn of peace, my Motherland.
 It is the glimmer of the funeral pyre burning to
 ashes the vast flesh—the self-love of the
 Nation,—dead under its own excess.
 Thy morning waits behind the patient dark of the
 East,
 Meek and silent.

Keep watch, India.
 Bring your offerings of worship for that sacred
 sunrise.
 Let the first hymn of its welcome sound in your
 voice and sing
 “Come, Peace, thou daughter of God’s own great
 suffering.
 Come with thy treasure of contentment, the sword
 of fortitude,
 And meekness crowning thy forehead.”

Be not ashamed, my brothers, to stand before the
 proud and the powerful
 With your white robe of simpleness.
 Let your crown be of humility, your freedom the
 freedom of the soul.
 Build God’s throne daily upon the ample bare-
 ness of your poverty
 And know that what is huge is not great and pride
 is not everlasting.

[From Tagore, *Nationalism* (1917; Westport, CT:
 Greenwood, 1973), 157–159.]

MUHAMMAD IQBAL: POET AND PHILOSOPHER OF ISLAM

Sayyid Ahmad Khan had brought rationalism and the desire for knowledge and progress to the Indian Muslims; Muhammad Iqbal brought them inspiration and a phi-

losophy. Next to the Quran, there is no single influence upon the consciousness of the Pakistani intelligentsia so powerful as Iqbal's poetry. In his own time it kindled the enthusiasm of Muslim intellectuals for the values of Islam, and rallied the Muslim community once again to the banner of their faith. For this reason Iqbal is looked upon today as the spiritual founder of Pakistan.

Muhammad Iqbal (1873–1938) was born at Sialkot in the Punjab in the year 1873. His parents, devout and pious Muslims, inculcated in him the teachings of Islam. Eventually Iqbal was sent to the Government College at Lahore, where he graduated in 1899 and was appointed a lecturer in philosophy. After studying philosophy at Cambridge and in Germany, and having also qualified as a barrister-at-law, he came back to his teaching at Lahore in 1908. Two years later, in order to free himself from service to a foreign government, he gave up teaching and started the private practice of law. Still, his heart was not in the legal profession, and he undertook only enough work to keep himself in modest comfort. For the most part, his time was spent in study and writing. It was not long before he came to be recognized as a thinker of importance and the greatest Urdu poet of his time.

While in Europe, Iqbal had come into contact with the leading schools of Western philosophy; he was particularly influenced by Nietzsche and Bergson. These influences are evident in his thought, and yet the main source of Iqbal's ideas is the Islamic tradition itself. His knowledge of Islamic thought and literature, especially of the Persian classics, was profound. Above all he was indebted to the great mystic thinker of Turkey, Jalal-ud-Din Rumi, whom he quotes again and again with deep appreciation. Iqbal had an aversion, however, toward those Sufis who favored a mystical quietism. He held their philosophy of inaction responsible for the decadence of Islam. Action is life and inaction is death, he taught. In strife with evil, not in the peace of the grave, lies the true meaning of human life.

Iqbal had a burning conviction that Islam provided the remedy for many of the world's ills. The division of humanity into national and racial groups, according to him, was the greatest curse of the day. Injustice in any form was abhorrent and had to be fought. The evils of colonialism, the tyranny of the landlord over the unprotected tenant, the cupidity of capitalism, and the exploitation of the resources of a weaker people by a stronger nation were all hateful in his eyes. The real remedy lay, according to him, in the cultivation of the innate greatness of the human self, so that, realizing its real qualities, it would become incapable of meaner tendencies like greed, injustice, and fear. Such development of the self, he insisted, is possible only through a true understanding of the relationship between God and man. Even God does not demand the destruction of the self; He is desirous that the self should be developed to its fullest capacity. The self, however, finds its fullest meaning only through identification with the life of the community, and for that purpose the community should be organized on a righteous basis. The supreme example of such a community is the community of Islam, because its sole foundation is the acceptance of God and the Law, which is the criterion of righteousness. Since Islam recognizes no superiority

of birth or rank or wealth within its bosom, and judges excellence by righteousness alone, the fullest cultivation of the self is possible within its fold (the male self, that is; Iqbal had almost nothing to say to or about Muslim women). This ideal Muslim community, moreover, is not limited by time or space, according to the Islamic doctrine that all truth from God revealed anywhere at any time is Islam, Muhammad being the final recipient of this truth in its most perfect form. Such a community was not meant to be fragmented into nations.

The means by which the self can develop to its full height is love, which is the Sufi word for the ecstatic devotion to God. Whereas human reason is limited by time and space, love is not; it is therefore capable of creating immutable qualities in the self. Iqbal thinks that real time is not the linear time of which we have a feeling, nor the limited time of the scientist, because he must think in terms of transient and limited space, but that it is higher and everlasting. It is infinite and eternal, indeed an attribute of God himself. It is in this time that the self finds its ultimate fulfillment.

Realizing the importance of his message to the whole Islamic world, Iqbal began to write in Persian, which was more widely understood and read in the Muslim world than Urdu. In Urdu, he ranks high as a philosophic poet and is considered by many as second only to Ghalib (1797–1869) in charm, depth, and richness of ideas. Unfortunately Iqbal's poetry is difficult to translate; even in the excellent translations reproduced below, it loses much of the beauty and force of the original.

Iqbal died in 1938, deeply mourned by Hindus as well as Muslims in India, and by Muslims in other lands as well. Rabindranath Tagore, his closest counterpart as both poet and philosopher anxious to revitalize his own cultural heritage, paid this tribute: "The death of Sir Muhammad Iqbal creates a void in our literature that, like a mortal wound, will take a very long time to heal. India, whose place to-day in the world is too narrow, can ill afford to miss a poet whose poetry had such universal value."

SONGS FOR CHILDREN

Early in the twentieth century, 1904 and 1910, Iqbal composed a set of two patriotic poems for children; the first was called "Indian Song" and the second, "Song of the Millat [Religious Community]." Parts of the first one are sung by schoolchildren in India as a kind of unofficial national anthem, while the second is less well known. The songs express the double identifications of South Asian Muslims. Their sequence also reflects the changes in Iqbal's thinking during his time in Europe—the first poem was composed before his trip, and the second one after his return. Both poems are in the traditional lyric "ghazal" form, and have the same formal poetic structure (meter, rhyme, refrain); their similar titles also show clearly that they are designed to be in dialogue with each other.

INDIAN SONG (1904)

Better than the whole world, our Hindustan—
We are its nightingales, it is our garden.

If we're abroad, our heart remains in the homeland;
Consider us there too, where our heart would be.

That highest mountain, neighbor of the sky—
It is our sentry, it is our door-guard.

In her lap play thousands of rivers
Thanks to which our garden is the envy of Paradise.

Oh river Ganges, you remember those days
When our caravan descended on your banks!

Religion does not teach us to keep enmity among ourselves:
We are Indian ["Hindi"], our homeland is Hindustan.

Greece and Egypt and Byzantium, all were erased from the world,
But till now our name and sign remain.

There's something, that our existence doesn't get erased—
For centuries the cycles of time have remained our enemy.

Iqbal, I have no confidant in the world.
What does anyone know of my hidden grief?

[From Iqbal, *Kulliyat-e Iqbal Urdu* (Lahore: Shaikh Ghulam
Ali and Sons, 1973), 83. Trans. Frances Pritchett.]

SONG OF THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY (1910)

China and Arabia are ours, Hindustan is ours—
We are Muslims, our homeland is the whole world.

The legacy of monotheism is in our breasts,
It is not easy to erase our name and sign.

Among the temples of the world, that House of God is first;
We are its guardians, it is our guardian.

In the shadow of swords we have been raised and grown up,
The scimitar of the crescent moon is our communal sign.

In the valleys of the west our call to prayer echoed—
Our moving flood wasn't stopped by anyone.

We are not, oh sky, ones to be oppressed by falsehood.
You have already tested us a hundred times.

Oh garden of Andalusia, you remember those days
When our nest was in your branches.

Oh waves of the Tigris, you also recognize us,
Even now your river tells our stories.

Oh pure land, for your honor we were cut to pieces,
Even now our blood flows in your veins.

Our caravan-leader is the Chief of the Hijaz [the Prophet],
Through that name the peace of our soul survives.

Iqbal's song rings out like the call of a bell—
Again our caravan takes to the road.

[From Iqbal, *Kulliyat-e Iqbal Urdu*, 159. Trans. Frances Pritchett.]

LOVE

In a Persian poem from his first published poetry collection of 1915, Iqbal writes of love as the ecstatic love of God—not in a quietist, passive sense, but as the source of the highest inspiration for true knowledge and effective, righteous action.

The luminous point whose name is the Self
Is the life-spark beneath our dust.
By Love it is made more lasting,
More living, more burning, more glowing.
From Love proceeds the radiance of its being
And the development of its unknown possibilities.
Its nature gathers fire from Love,
Love instructs it to illumine the world.
Love fears neither sword nor dagger,
Love is not born of water and air and earth.
Love makes peace and war in the world,

Love is the fountain of life, Love is the flashing sword of Death.
The hardest rocks are shivered by Love's glance:
Love of God at last becomes wholly God.

[From Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self*, trans. R. A. Nicholson,
rev. ed. (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004), 28–29.]

TIME

Iqbal believed that the conception of time as finite and limited induced a passive attitude toward life; if time itself is limited, nothing that exists in time can be of everlasting value, and all that is achieved by human action must perish. To combat this tendency toward inertia, he extols a positive, active attitude to the world: since time is eternal, human action has a lasting importance. This idea militated against both inaction and mere expediency.

The cause of Time is not the revolution of the sun:
Time is everlasting, but the sun does not last forever.
Time is joy and sorrow, festival and fast;
Time is the secret of moonlight and sunlight.
Thou hast extended Time, like Space,
And distinguished Yesterday from Tomorrow.
Thou hast fled, like a scent, from thine own garden;
Thou hast made thy prison with thine own hand.
Our Time which has neither beginning nor end,
Blossoms from the flower bed of our mind.
To know its root quickens the living with new life:
Its being is more splendid than the dawn.
Life is of Time, and Time is of Life.

[From Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self*, 137–138.]

MUSLIMS ARE ONE IN SOUL

In the following passages from his second Persian poetry collection, *Mysteries of Selflessness* (1918), Iqbal emphasizes the Muslim community. Reflecting the concern of Muslims at that time over the fate of the Ottoman Empire and other Muslim lands conquered or threatened by European powers, Iqbal advocates a pan-Islamism based on the doctrine of an indivisible Muslim community. Muslims are united throughout space and time by a common faith and a common history.

A common aim shared by the multitude
Is unity which, when it is mature,
Forms the Community; the many live

Only by virtue of the single bond.
 The Muslim's unity from natural faith
 Derives, and this the Prophet taught us,
 So that we lit a lantern on Truth's way.
 This pearl was fished from his unfathomed sea,
 And of his bounty we are one in soul.
 Let not this unity go from our hands,
 And we endure to all eternity. . . .
 Our Essence is not bound to any Place;
 The vigor of our wine is not contained
 In any bowl; Chinese and Indian
 Alike the shard that constitutes our jar,
 Turkish and Syrian alike the clay
 Forming our body; neither is our heart
 Of India, or Syria, or Rum,²⁶
 Nor any fatherland do we profess
 Except Islam.

[From Iqbal, *The Mysteries of Selflessness*,
 trans. Arthur J. Arberry (London: John Murray, 1953), 20, 29.]

THE NEED FOR UNDERSTANDING ISLAM IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN KNOWLEDGE

In 1930 Iqbal published *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, a compilation of lectures he had delivered in Madras, Hyderabad, and Aligarh. The leitmotif of the volume is the call for a radical reinterpretation of Islamic thought in which there is room for human reason, democratic government, and reform of Sharia law.

During the last five hundred years religious thought in Islam has been practically stationary. There was a time when European thought received inspiration from the world of Islam. The most remarkable phenomenon of modern history, however, is the enormous rapidity with which the world of Islam is spiritually moving towards the West. There is nothing wrong in this movement, for European culture, on its intellectual side, is only a further development of some of the most important phases of the culture of Islam. Our only fear is that the dazzling exterior of European culture may arrest our movement and we may fail to reach the true inwardness of that culture. During all the centuries of our intellectual stupor Europe has been seriously thinking on the great problems in which the philosophers and scientists of Islam were so keenly interested. Since the Middle Ages, when the schools of Muslim theology were completed, infinite advance has taken place in the domain of human thought and experience. The extension of man's power over nature has given him a new faith and a fresh

sense of superiority over the forces that constitute his environment. New points of view have been suggested, old problems have been restated in the light of fresh experience, and new problems have arisen. . . . No wonder then that the younger generation of Islam in Asia and Africa demand a fresh orientation of their faith. With the reawakening of Islam, therefore, it is necessary to examine, in an independent spirit, what Europe has thought and how far the conclusions reached by her can help us in the revision and, if necessary, reconstruction, of theological thought in Islam. Besides this it is not possible to ignore the generally antireligious and especially anti-Islamic propaganda in Central Asia which has already crossed the Indian frontier. . . .

The task before the modern Muslim is, therefore, immense. He has to re-think the whole system of Islam without completely breaking with the past. . . . The only course open to us is to approach modern knowledge with a respectful but independent attitude and to appreciate the teachings of Islam in the light of that knowledge, even though we may be led to differ from those who have gone before us.

[From Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*
(Lahore: M. Ashraf, 1944), 7–8, 97.]

FROM PROPHECY TO INDIVIDUAL JUDGMENT OF ONE'S INNER AND OUTER EXPERIENCE

The creed of Islam states, "There is no god but God and Muhammad is His prophet." The second half of the statement is taken by Muslims to mean that Muhammad was the last of the prophets. Iqbal here interprets the closing of the age of prophecy as opening a new age in which individuals must explore for themselves the realm of inner, mystical experience, while maintaining the spirit of critical, independent judgment about it.

Now during the minority of mankind psychic energy develops what I call prophetic consciousness—a mode of economizing individual thought and choice by providing ready-made judgments, choices, and ways of action. With the birth of reason and critical faculty, however, life, in its own interest, inhibits the formation and growth of non-rational modes of consciousness through which psychic energy flowed at an earlier stage of human evolution. . . . The Prophet of Islam seems to stand between the ancient and the modern world. In so far as the source of his revelation is concerned he belongs to the ancient world; in so far as the spirit of his revelation is concerned he belongs to the modern world. In him life discovers other sources of knowledge suitable to its new direction. The birth of Islam, as I hope to be able presently to prove to your satisfaction, is the birth of inductive intellect. In Islam prophecy reaches its perfection in discovering the need of its own abolition. This involves the keen perception

that life cannot forever be kept in leading strings; that in order to achieve full self-consciousness man must finally be thrown back on his own resources. The abolition of priesthood and hereditary kingship in Islam, the constant appeal to reason and experience in the Quran, and the emphasis that it lays on Nature and History as sources of human knowledge, are all different aspects of the same idea of finality. The idea, however, does not mean that mystic experience, which qualitatively does not differ from the experience of the prophet, has now ceased to exist. . . .

God reveals His signs in inner as well as outer experience, and it is the duty of man to judge the knowledge-yielding capacity of all aspects of experience. The idea of finality [the belief that Muhammad was the final prophet], therefore, should not be taken to suggest that the ultimate fate of life is complete displacement of emotion by reason. Such a thing is neither possible nor desirable. The intellectual value of the idea is that it tends to create an independent critical attitude towards mystic experience by generating the belief that all personal authority, claiming a supernatural origin, has come to an end in the history of man. . . . The function of the idea is to open up fresh vistas of knowledge in the domain of man's inner experience, just as the first half of the formula of Islam ["There is no god but God"] has created and fostered the spirit of a critical observation of man's outer experience by divesting the forces of nature of that divine character with which earlier culture had clothed them. Mystical experience, then, however unusual and abnormal, must now be regarded by a Muslim as a perfectly natural experience, open to critical scrutiny like other aspects of human experience. This is clear from the Prophet's own attitude towards Ibn-i-Sayyad's psychic experiences.

[From Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 125–127.]

MUSLIM LEGISLATURES AS A MEANS FOR THE EVOLUTION OF ISLAMIC LAW

An innovative feature of Iqbal's thinking is his further extension of the traditional Sunni view that one important source of guidance is the consensus (*ijmā*) of the community—as arrived at by Muslims who have exercised *ijtihād*, the strong mental effort required to form a judgment on a question of Islamic law. Iqbal interpreted this, in light of the need of contemporary Muslim societies for adaptive strategies, as an endorsement of the legitimizing power of the legislature.

The third source of Mohammedan [i.e., Islamic] Law is *Ijma*,²⁸ which is in my opinion perhaps the most important legal notion in Islam. It is, however, strange that this important notion, while invoking great academic discussions in early Islam, remained practically a mere idea, and rarely assumed the form

of a permanent institution of any Mohammedan country. Possibly its transformation into a permanent legislative institution was contrary to the political interests of absolute monarchy that grew up in Islam. . . . It is, however, extremely satisfactory to note that the pressure of new world forces and the political experience of European nations are impressing on the mind of modern Islam the value and possibilities of the idea of Ijma. The growth of republican spirit, and the gradual formation of legislative assemblies in Muslim lands constitutes a great step in advance. The transfer of the power of Ijtihad from individual representatives of schools to a Muslim legislative assembly which, in view of the growth of opposing sects, is the only possible form Ijma can take in modern times, will secure contributions to legal discussion from laymen who happen to possess a keen insight into affairs. In this way alone we can stir into activity the dormant spirit of life in our legal system, and give it an evolutionary outlook. In India, however, difficulties are likely to arise; for it is doubtful whether a non-Muslim legislative assembly can exercise the power of Ijtihad.

[From Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 173–174.]

FRAGMENTS FROM KASHMIR

The poem quoted below comes from Iqbal's last, posthumous book, *The Gift from Hijaz* (1938), and concerns Kashmir—a place for which he felt great affection, since his grandfather had been a Kashmiri Pandit from Srinagar and had converted to Islam.

Known once on polished lips as Little Persia,
Downtrodden and penniless is Kashmir now,
A burning sigh breaks from the Heavens, to see
Their children crouch in awe of tyrant lords.
Telling the story of the heartless times,
An old peasant's home of misery under the hill—
Ah, this fine nation, fertile of hand and brain!
Where is Your judgment-day, oh God of ages?

The free man's veins are firm as veins of granite;
The bondman's weak as tendrils of the vine,
And his heart too despairing and repining—
The free heart has life's tingling breath to fan it.
Quick pulse, clear vision, are the free man's treasure;
The unfree, to kindness and affection dead,
Has no more wealth than tears of his own shedding
And those glib words he has in such good measure.

Bondman and free can never come to accord:
One is the heavens' lackey, one their lord.

[From Iqbal, *Poems from Iqbal*, trans. V. G. Kiernan
(London: John Murray, 1955), 90.]

ART FOR THE NATION

Nationalist debates over how best to free India from colonial influence were not confined to the political sphere. They also took place in many other cultural arenas, including literary genres, music, dance, architecture, and the fine arts. What should an “authentic” Indian music, dance, or art look like? In this section we look at three Indian artists or art historians, all of whom struggled to resolve the tension between creating a cohesive cultural form as demanded by the nationalist project, and reflecting a more individual, even alienated, artistic sense, such as exists in most modernist movements. Indeed, the relationship between global modernity and Indian national identity—a relationship molded by the colonial context—dominated the Indian art scene from the early twentieth century on, especially in the pre-Independence years.

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, the ideals of the Bengal School, started by E. B. Havell in 1896 to restore an “authentic” Indian art to students trained too much in the styles of the West, predominated. Reacting against the Calcutta Art Studio’s reliance on academic naturalism, perspective, and materialism, and seeking instead what they felt to be the lost spirituality of Indian art, Havell and his associates encouraged a return to Mughal miniature painting styles as being more genuinely Indian. For many artists and viewers, the pathos associated with this recovery of past artistry meshed well with a nationalist idealization of a real or imaginary Indian unity, especially during the swadeshi political period after 1905. Others interpreted this traditionalist call as an attempt to obstruct their artistic progress by blocking training in Western canons. Interestingly, early nationalists were able to reconcile political resistance to the Raj with a faith in the absolute values of Western art.

By the 1920s, the Bengal School was in decline, under the onslaught of various modernist movements that emphasized individualism over unity; the parochial, primitive, or indigenous over the universal; and the depiction of reality over the expression of swadeshi sentimentality. After 1920, too, there was diminishing space for art in the nationalist program, for under Gandhi’s leadership politics and art went their separate ways. In this context of controversy and experimentation, two famous Indian artists—Abanindranath Tagore and Amrita Sher-Gil—attempted to carve out for themselves a space for genuinely Indian and yet individual art styles, and they described the thinking behind their efforts in some of their essays and memoirs. Although initially a supporter of the Bengal School, Indian art historian Ananda Coomaraswamy had the foresight,

even in 1910, to predict this break from slavish imitations, whether of Western conventions or of the Indian past.

*ART AND SWADESHI: THE CONTRIBUTION
OF ANANDA COOMARASWAMY*

Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy (1877–1947) was the son of a Tamil father and a British mother. He was educated in England, where he received a doctorate in geology, but on an assignment as a geologist to Ceylon in 1903 he realized that his true passion was South Asian art. In 1909 he moved to Calcutta, in the middle of the Swadeshi movement, and devoted himself to the creation through art of a cultural nationalism. Professionally, he aligned himself with Havell and other Bengal School supporters in their critique of the colonial art schools, their denigration of the mass-produced, “undignified,” falsely naturalistic deities of the celebrated Indian painter Ravi Varma (1848–1906), their utopian disparagement of industrialization, and their championing of indigenous decorative arts and crafts. Before leaving India for the United States in 1917, Coomaraswamy made a major contribution to scholarship on late medieval painting by distinguishing the Rajput style from the Mughal style (although he declared that the latter was not genuinely Indian). From 1917 until his death he held the post of Keeper of Indian and Islamic Arts in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Famed in his time as the finest scholar of Indian art, Coomaraswamy was known as one of the first Indians to interpret the meaning of Asian art for Western audiences.

SWADESHI: TRUE AND FALSE

Coomaraswamy aimed to revive an authentic Hindu art; for him, swadeshi was a spiritual ideal, not a political goal, and in fact he decried the harm done to art by an interpretation of swadeshi that was merely economic and political. He berated Indian nationalists for condemning Lord Curzon: more important than Curzon’s bad political decisions about Bengal were his praiseworthy patronage and preservation of Indian art.

All those who have studied the Industrial Arts of India unite in recognizing and deploring their profound decay, and in very many cases, their practical extinction. Investigation invariably shows that goods that ought to be, and once were, common in the market, are now only to be seen in museums. One hundred, or even fifty years ago, it would have been possible to fill many museums worthily with the everyday handiwork of Indian artisans: now this would be possible only after years of patient collecting in remote districts. During the nineteenth century India has in fact ceased to excel in those Industrial arts which provided the bulk

of her exports, the main sources of her wealth (after agriculture), and of the refined luxury of her homes. . . .

During this period—if we are to judge from the wreckage of her Industrial arts remaining to us—we must rank the civilization of India indeed highly, for it could have been truly said that in her homes, whether of rich or poor, there could be found nothing that was not either useful or beautiful. In exchange for this world of beauty that was our birthright, the nineteenth century has made of our country a “dumping ground” for all the vulgar superfluities of European over-production; and all that the Swadeshi movement of the twentieth century has done is to provide us with many spurious imitations. . . .

It could hardly have been otherwise, for behind the Swadeshi movement there is no serious and consistent ideal. Its leaders have had but one thought before them—to save money. The movement has lacked almost totally in those constructive elements which we meet with in similar movements in other countries, such as Denmark or Ireland. Never have I seen in any Swadeshi literature the wish expressed to preserve Indian manufacturers on account of their intrinsic excellence, or because the presence amongst us of these highly skilled craftsmen represented an important element in the national culture, or because these craftsmen still worked under conditions of life still infinitely superior, physically and spiritually, to those of the European factory-slaves.

Too often the leaders of our political movement have forgotten (as men forgot in the early days of the development of European industrialism) that elementary principle of statecraft, that *men are of more account than things*. They have forgotten that the goal of all material civilization is not labour but leisure, and that industry without art only brutalizes and degrades. For *things* then—things economic, political, temporary—they have been willing to undermine both our immemorial industrial culture, and to degrade the status and destroy the physique of those artisans who once served us so faithfully and who even now if we would let them would make our cities and our houses beautiful again. I know no sign more ominous for the future of the Indian civilization than our utter indifference to social industrial ideals, and the heartless callousness with which we have cast aside the services of those who built our homes . . . leaving them to eke out a precarious living by making petty trivialities for tourists, curio-collectors, and for Anglo-Indian bungalows, or to drift into the ranks of menial labourers or factory hands. Do you think that we can thus degrade the status of so many men without impairing the vitality of our national life and without injuring the basis of its possible prosperity?

We, who think that we are educated and progressive, we, who attend conferences and sit on legislative councils, who are rulers of states, or earn more princely incomes in courts of law, we ourselves have despised and hated everything Indian, and it is by that hatred that we have destroyed our industries and degraded the status of our artisans. And when at last our pockets were touched—then so far from realizing what we had done, we set ourselves to form Swadeshi companies

for making enamelled cufflinks (with pansies on them), for dyeing yarn (with German dyes), or making uncomfortable furniture (for Anglo-Indians). We never thought that the fault was in ourselves. We lived in caricatured English villas, and studied the last fashion in collars and ties and sat on the verandahs of Collectors bungalows and strove to preserve our respectability by listening to gramophone records of the London music halls instead of living Indian singers—we learned to sit on chairs and eat with spoons and to adorn our walls with German oleographs and our floors with Brussels carpets: and then we thought to save our souls by taking shares in some Swadeshi company for making soap.

True Swadeshi is none of these things: it is a way of looking at life. It is essentially sincerity. Seek this first, learn once more the *art of living*, and you will find that our ancient civilization, industrial no less than spiritual, will re-arise from the ashes of our vulgarity and parasitism of today. . . .

Yet so far as I am aware it has never occurred to any Swadeshi politician to demand from Government that in public buildings Indian architecture should be the rule, and Indian architects employed so that the State should again patronize and foster Indian artistic industries. Nearly everywhere in India there are still living hereditary and most capable working architects . . . like other craftsmen they are being starved by neglect and forced to adopt menial or agricultural work for a bare living. . . .

I should like to say in passing, that in speaking thus I do not mean in any way to disparage things European, as such. Nothing is further from my thoughts than that absurd notion which is expressed in the not uncommon saying, “that *our* ancestors were civilized when Europeans were ‘dressed’ in woad.” As a matter of fact early Keltic and Teutonic Europe was much more civilized in some respects than we are today—at least it cared more for creative and imaginative art. What I do wish to point out is that *our imitations*, whether in Swadeshi factories or in our lives, of things European are and must always be for ourselves socially and industrially disintegrating. . . .

Nor do I mean that we should never assimilate or adopt any foreign idea or custom. On the contrary I believe that even in such things as music and the plastic arts, and still more in sociology we have some things to learn from others, as well as to recover from our own past. . . .

What is necessary is that we should let the real love of our country allow us to realize that Her gifts are (with the rarest exceptions) really and intrinsically better than those which we can import—that our dyes, our handmade gold thread, our designs, our ways of dressing and building, our jewellery, our carpets and all that goes to make the daily environment of our lives—are better than the things we import from Europe—more beautiful, more enduring, more vital in response and more a part of our real life. Then it will not be so difficult perhaps to spend a little more in the first instance on such things. But all this is not a matter of political platforms, it is simply and solely a matter of National Education, the sort of education that will help us some day to prefer a living

singer to what an Indian friend of mine has very aptly called “the voice of the living dead.” Then we shall be saved not only the expense of importing gramophones, but all the bother of trying to make them in local factories, with indifferent success. This is the parable of all the other Industrial Arts.

[From Coomaraswamy, “Swadeshi: True and False,” from a speech in Allahabad, 1910, reprinted in *Art and Swadeshi*, 2nd ed. (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1994), 7–9, 12, 13, 16–17.]

THE “ORIENTAL ART” OF ABANINDRANATH TAGORE

Abanindranath Tagore (1871–1951), a nephew of Rabindranath, was a protégé and ally of E. B. Havell; he was also the principal artist of the Bengal School, and the first major exponent of swadeshi art. After early training in the techniques of Western painting at the Government School of Art, Abanindranath veered away from the Western aesthetic, believing it to be too “materialistic.” Like many others in his day, he critiqued what he perceived as the crudely realistic fleshly beauties of Ravi Varma’s painting; his own early attempts to recover an Indian painting style commenced by experimenting with depictions of Rādhā and Krishna, who became, in his hands, thin and ethereal—fit for the conveying of a spiritual mood. Under Havell’s influence Abanindranath discovered Mughal paintings, which amazed him for their fine detail, and he began to paint in a style reminiscent of Mughal miniatures. Havell and he agreed that Indian art needed to be revitalized from within as a means of countering the European colonial models, and together they formed a “national” art movement in Bengal that encouraged artists to develop homegrown or locally inspired styles. In this search for authenticity, Abanindranath joined with pan-Asianists like the Japanese artist Okakura (1862–1913), a group of artists who mutually influenced one another and thought of their art as “Oriental” or “Asian” rather than as tied to their own particular country. In his later work, Abanindranath incorporated elements of Chinese and Japanese calligraphy into his Mughal-inspired paintings of epic stories, deities, and nationalist heroes. It was in this “Oriental,” swadeshi period that he produced one of his most famous pieces—a depiction of Bhārat Mātā, or Mother India, who is nonmartial, slender, dreamlike, and conveyed in pale colors.

Eventually, by the 1920s, the Mughal style failed to satisfy Abanindranath, for he found the form ineffective for the expression of feeling, or emotion. He turned away from nationalist swadeshi art to the folk art of Bengal, to his own private world of images.

WHEN ARTISTS CAN TAKE LIBERTY

Abanindranath’s essay “Notes on Indian Artistic Anatomy” makes two important points that reflect his long-standing commitments first to artistic creativity and license, and second to the recovery and use of an indigenous style. While conversant

with and influenced by the directives on image production in the traditional Sanskrit art treatises (*shilpa shāstras*), Abanindranath felt that the true artist should be led, not bound, by their prescriptions. Homogeneity, whether in the service of the country or otherwise, is harmful.

Art is not for the justification of the Shilpa Shastra, but the Shastra is for the elucidation of Art. It is the concrete form which is evolved first, and then come its analyses and its commentaries, its standards and its proportions—codified in the form of Shastras. The constraints of childhood are meant to keep us from going astray before we have learnt to walk, to give us the chance of learning to stand upright; and not to keep us cramped and helpless for ever within the narrowness of limitations. He who realizes Dharma (the Law of Righteousness) attains freedom, but the seeker after Dharma has at first to feel the grappling bonds of scriptures and religious laws. Even so, the novice in Art submits to the constraints of shastric injunctions, while the master finds himself emancipated from the tyranny of standards, proportions and measures, of light, shade, perspective, and anatomy. . . .

When the inexperienced pilgrim goes to the temple of Jagannath, he has to submit to be led on step by step by his guide, who directs him at every turn to the right or to the left, up and down, till the path becomes familiar to him, and the guide ceases to be a necessity. And when at last the deity chooses to reveal himself, all else cease to exist for the devotee—temples and shrines, eastern and western gates and doorways, their symbols and their decorations, up and down, sacerdotal guidance and the mathematical preciseness of all calculating steps. The river strikes down its banks to build anew, and a similar impulse leads the artist to break down the bonds of shastric authority. Let us not imagine that our art-preceptors were in any way blind to this or that they were slow to appreciate the fact that an art hampered on all sides by the rigid bonds of shastric requisitions would never weigh anchor and set sail for those realms of joy which are the final goal of all art.

If we approach our sacred art-treatises in the spirit of scholarly criticism, we find them bristling all over with unyielding restrictions, and we are only too apt to overlook the abundant, though less obvious, relaxations which our sages have provided for, in order to safeguard the continuity and perpetuation of our art. “Sevaya-sevaka-bhabeshu pratima-lakshanam smritam.” Images should conform to prescribed type when they are to be contemplated in the spirit of worship. Does that not imply that the artist is to adhere to shastric formulae only when producing images intended for worship and that he is free, in all other cases, to follow his own art instinct? . . .

A perfectly built figure, faultless in its details, is one of the rarest things in the world; and in spite of general resemblances of features and form, between man and man, it is impossible to take any particular figure as a standard of ideal for all. Features like hands, feet, eyes or ears, are given to all men in pairs, and,

roughly speaking, these are structurally the same in one man as in another. But, our intimate acquaintance with the human race, and our habit of paying close attention to the details of a man's features, make us so acutely conscious of minute differences of physiognomy that the choice of the aesthetically ideal figure becomes a matter of serious difficulty for the artist. But in the case of the lower animals and plant organisms, the resemblances are apparently much closer and there seems to be a certain well defined fixity of form in the different specimens of the same object. Thus, there is apparently not much difference in form between, say, two birds or animals of the same species or between two leaves or flowers of the same variety of trees. The eggs laid by one hen have the same smoothness and regularity of contour as the eggs of any other hen, and any leaf taken from one peepul (*ficus religiosa*) tree has the same triangular form and pointed tip that we find on any other. It is for this reason, probably, that our great teachers have described the shapes of human limbs and organs not by comparison with those of other men but always in terms of flowers or birds or some other plant or animal features.

[*Abanindranath then goes on to explain—with line illustrations—the scriptural conventions for the depiction of ideal human body parts: the face is rounded like an egg or a betel leaf; the forehead like a drawn bow; the eyebrows like neem leaves, the ear like a vulture; the nose like a parrot's beak; the lips like bimba fruit; the chin like a mango-stone; the lines of the neck like those of a conch shell; the trunk like the head of a cow; the midriff like a lion's body; the shoulders like an elephant's head; the forearms and the thighs like plantain trunks; and the fingers like beans. The description of the eyes comes right after that of the ears.*]

THE EYES have been described as “fish-shaped.” But the similes used to describe the eyes are as endless as the range of emotions and thought that can be expressed through them. If we are to confine our similes to the *safari* fish, we have to ignore the round eyes, the wide open eyes, and a host of other varieties of eyes. Fresh additions have therefore constantly been made to our stock of similes. Thus the eyes have been compared among other things to the *khanjana*, the common wagtail, a small bird with a lively dancing gait; the eyes of the deer; the water-lily; the lotus leaf; and the little *safari*. Of these the first two are used chiefly in painted figures of women, while the other three are to be seen in the stone or metal images of gods as well as goddesses. . . . The eyes of women are by their very nature restless; but it must not be supposed that it is this characteristic alone that our art preceptors have tried to convey in choosing three such restless animals as the deer, the *khanjana*, and the *safari* for their similes. The forms and expressions peculiar to different types of eyes are very well suggested by these similes. . . .

[In sum,] the following are the general advices given by our Acharyas. . . . Where it is intended that the images should be approached in the spirit of a devotee before his deity, or of a servant before his master, the image must be made to adhere scrupulously to the forms and character prescribed by the shastras. All other images, which are not meant for worship, are to be made according to the

artist's own individual preferences. . . . Images that are drawn or painted, or made of sand, clay or plaster—it is no offence if such images fail to conform to the prescribed types. For these are intended only for temporary use and are usually thrown away, afterwards, and as they are generally made by the women themselves for worship, or recreation, or for the amusement of the children, it would be too much to expect that they would adhere strictly to the conventions demanded by the shastras. So our texts here definitely conceded absolute liberty to the artists in the cases considered above.

[From A. Tagore, "Some Notes on Indian Artistic Anatomy," translated from the original Bengali of 1913 by Sukumar Ray (Calcutta: Indian Society of Oriental Art, 1914), 2–3, 7–8, 15–16.]

THE DEATH-KNELL OF ORIENTALIST ART: AMRITA SHER-GIL AND THE "TRUE" INDIA

Although Amrita Sher-Gil (1913–1941) properly belongs to the period covered by chapters 6 and 7, we include her here because in a sense she closes the chapter in Indian art history that began with swadeshi art and its patronage by the Bengal School. The first professional woman artist in India, she is remembered today as much for her outlandish lifestyle choices, sexual partners, vital personality, and mysterious death as for her painting. The daughter of a Hungarian-Jewish musician and a Sikh nobleman, she spent her early years in Budapest and Paris, in training at the *École des Beaux-Arts*, where she was influenced by European modernism, and moved to India only in 1934, at the age of twenty-one. Initially influenced by Mughal miniatures and Ajanta cave paintings, she evinces in her mature style an instinctive empathy for women, a melancholic idealization of the poor, and a rejection of lofty, romanticized artistic nationalism in favor of depictions of poverty and despair.

MY DESTINY AS A PAINTER

Sher-Gil speaks about herself and the evolution of her art in the following undated essay.

Evolution of My Art

It seems to me that I never began painting, that I have always painted. And I have always had, with a strange certitude, the conviction that I was meant to be a painter and nothing else. Although I studied, I have never been taught painting in the actual sense of the word, because I possess in my psychological make-up a peculiarity that resents any outside interference. I have always, in everything, wanted to find out things for myself.

With this tendency it is rather fortunate that in 1929 when our parents decided to take my sister and myself to Paris for the study of music and painting respectively, the great French professor Lucien Simon took a fancy to my work and admitted me to his studio at the École des Beaux Arts. Before leaving for Europe I had worked entirely from imagination, and, although I went through an academic phase in Paris, I had never imitated nature servilely; and now I am deviating more and more from naturalism towards the evolving of new, and “significant” forms, corresponding to my individual conception of the essence of the inner meaning of my subject.

Lucien Simon never “taught.” He made us think for ourselves and solve technical and pictorial problems ourselves, merely encouraging each of those pupils whose work interested him, in his or her own individual forms of self-expression.

I worked for some time at the École des Beaux Arts and got prizes at the annual portrait and still life competitions for three consecutive years. My work in those days was absolutely Western in conception and execution except for the fact that it was never entirely tame or conventional.

I had not in those days learnt that simplicity is the essence of perfection. One sees with such exuberance, so uncritically, when one is very young that one is liable to sacrifice the artistic whole to unessential details, if it happens to be pleasing to the eye. One lacks the faculty of discrimination, so essential to the production of the true art.

Towards the end of 1933 I began to be haunted by an intense longing to return to India, feeling in some strange inexplicable way that there lay my destiny as a painter. We returned at the end of 1934. My professor had often said that, judging by the richness of my colouring, I was not really in my element in the grey studios of the West, that my artistic personality would find its true atmosphere in the colour and light of the East. He was right, but my impression was so different from the one I had expected, and so profound that it lasts to this day.

It was the vision of a winter in India—desolate, yet strangely beautiful—of endless tracks of luminous yellow-grey land, of dark-bodied, sad-faced, incredibly thin men and women who move silently looking almost like silhouettes and over which an indefinable melancholy reigns. It was different from the India, voluptuous, colourful . . . superficial, the India . . . [of] . . . the tempting travel posters that I had expected to see.

Before leaving for Europe as a very young girl I had been so wholly an introvert that I had never really seen or observed anything round or outside me. I worked entirely from imagination in those days, and living on pictures instead of reality I conceived India through the medium of those unutterably mediocre specimens of fifth-rate Western art that still abound in the local exhibitions. . . . And I “regret” to say that, not satisfied with the production *ad infinitum* of this type of painting by the Europeans here, it is perpetuated, in blissful ignorance

as to its artistic demerits, by a number of Indian artists! . . . I call this tourist painting . . . being absolutely superficial, both pictorially and psychologically . . . where there is no room for artistic conception, penetration or insight.

Those so called paintings that depict an India where the sun shines with an inevitability only equaled by the mediocrity of the conception and execution of that sunlight as it plays on flesh tints of standardized grey-browns and gives opportunity to the ambitious artists to exploit the possibilities of orange reflected lights and blue “half lights” (cheap tricks of the trade that have to be learnt but must be forgotten before one can even think of producing true works of art). Those serene or sun-flooded landscapes, consciously naturalistic, with authentically Indian ruins in the “middle distance” serve as trade marks, conclusive, irrefutable proofs as to the genuineness of the article (manufactured in India), but not one brush stroke of which conveys India really. . . . Those portraits of beggars, of the miserable, the proof of India, viewed as objects of topographical interest without an atom of either artistic or human understanding.

My violent reaction to both the pictorial and psychological conventions of this type of painting and my own mode of pictorial expression will be understood, to some extent, when viewed in the light of my first impression of India, as opposed to the pictures I had mentally made of it, thanks to the above mentioned forms.

I am an individualist, evolving a new technique, which, though not necessarily Indian in the traditional sense of the word, will yet be fundamentally Indian in spirit. With the eternal significance of form and colour I interpret India and, principally, the life of the Indian poor, on the plane that transcends the plane of mere sentimental interest.

[From *Amrita Sher-Gil: Essays by Vivan Sundaram and Others* (Bombay: Marg, 1972), 139–140.]



Chapter 6

MAHATMA GANDHI AND RESPONSES

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869–1948) dominated the Indian National Congress from Tilak's death in 1920 until the eve of independence in 1947. Distinguished as a political leader by his signature theme of non-violence, he believed he had a mission to keep the national movement from degenerating into anti-British violence and internecine warfare. Like the early Moderate leaders (among whom he most admired Gokhale), he worked for greater social and economic reforms, as well as for political progress toward national self-government. His spiritual strength, austere lifestyle, and dedicated service to the poorest and most humiliated of his countrymen won him the popular title of Mahatma ("Great Soul"). His powerful leadership of mass movements, inventive common sense, and courageous firmness in opposing and negotiating with India's British rulers made him his country's chief guide during the final decades of foreign rule.

Gandhi's homeland of Gujarat was one of the country's most prosperous regions, its many rivers welcoming merchant ships from ports along the Arabian Sea. When British forces entered Gujarat in the early nineteenth century, they left most of this remote and turbulent peninsula under the control of its many warring chieftains, but froze their warfare with one another by forcing them to sign treaties placing themselves under British protection. The Gandhi family, many of whom were merchants, thrived under this new peace. Gandhi's paternal grandfather, a skilled customs collector and diplomat, rose to the office of

diwan (chief minister) to the Rajput king of the tiny coastal state of Porbandar. Gandhi's father inherited the post in turn, and then he passed it on to his younger brother after receiving a better diwan-ship at Rajkot, an inland principality the British were using as the center of their post-1857 efforts to improve the lot and enlighten the minds of the people in this rugged frontier area.

Mohandas was seven when his family moved to Rajkot, and he at once began what would be eleven years of study in the school system created by the Bombay Department of Public Instruction, with classes conducted in a mix of Gujarati and English. But the education that made the deepest impression on him emanated from his parents. He was their youngest child, and their favorite. Some of his father's character seems to have entered into Gandhi's own, in the form of a stubborn persistence in doing what he believed was right. It was his mother, though, who influenced him most deeply, through her saintly self-denial, her frequent fasting, and her readiness to serve others, including the sick and the poor. Western secular influences were weak and Jain non-violence strong among the merchant castes of peninsular Gujarat, and, although young Gandhi secretly experimented with meat-eating in his early teens, he quickly discontinued the practice because of both an innate horror at such a breach of non-violence to living creatures, and a reluctance to lie to his parents.

When Mohandas was sixteen his father died, having named him as heir to the position of diwan. Six months later the British deposed Porbandar's king for misgovernment, took over the management of the kingdom, and purged many members of the extended Gandhi family from the administration. A wise brahman friend of the family suggested that they send young Mohandas to London to earn a law degree (which at that time could be done with only a high school degree). At first his mother refused to let him go, fearing that English habits would corrupt him. She agreed only when he took a triple vow, suggested and administered by a learned Jain monk of their own caste. Mohandas vowed not to touch meat, wine, or women. Although in Rajkot his adventurous voyage was approved by his caste fellows, in Bombay the caste's headman declared him outcaste for making this allegedly polluting voyage across the ocean.

London made a twofold impact on this impressionable youth from one of India's most tradition-bound regions. One effect was to anglicize his appearance, speech, and social conduct, turning him into a nattily dressed barrister-at-law. Another effect was to bring him into close contact with English men and women holding ideas similar to those of his parents on subjects such as vegetarianism, reincarnation, the law of karma, and the immortality of the soul. Gandhi also sought out Christian churches in order to hear some of the best preachers of the day. After nearly three years in the capital of Britain's empire, he was admitted to the bar and boarded a steamship for home, feeling "deep regret" at leaving "dear London."¹

Now twenty-one, Gandhi found it difficult to reenter his own society and culture after his English experiences. First, he found that his beloved mother

had died a few months earlier. “Most of my cherished hopes were shattered,” he recalled later in his *Autobiography*.² Next he failed in his attempt to set up a law practice in Bombay, India’s most Westernized city, and was forced to join his eldest brother in doing petty legal work in their hometown. Deracinated from the culture of his family (he insisted that his wife, Kasturbai, and his children wear shoes and socks and eat oatmeal), he was also treated as socially inferior by the English, whose company he had enjoyed in London. His restlessness increased after he clashed with the chief British official in the region, on whom his hopes for a more prestigious job depended. In 1893, less than two years after his return, he decided to leave India again, this time for South Africa, where his brother had found him a job with a Muslim trading firm from Gujarat.

A series of racist actions by white South Africans impressed Gandhi with the need to do something to defend the human rights of the 40,000 Indian settlers there. Within a month of landing he had been shoved out of a first-class train compartment, beaten on a stagecoach for not giving up his seat to a white man, and kicked off the sidewalk—all because of the color of his skin. In response, he used British methods of political agitation: writing letters to the newspapers, leading a petition drive, and founding a political organization. With this organization’s support, he then wrote two pamphlets to describe the injustices his countrymen were suffering and to appeal for redress. “All this activity resulted in winning the Indians numerous friends in South Africa and in obtaining the active sympathy of all parties in India. It also opened up and placed before the South African Indians a definite line of action.”³

Thus, at twenty-four, Gandhi the political leader was born. At twenty-seven he toured India to enlist further support for his South African cause; he met Surendranath Banerjea, Mahadev Govind Ranade, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and Gopal Krishna Gokhale, and adopted Gokhale as his “political guru.” He was nearly killed by a white mob when he returned to South Africa, but refused to press charges; two years later, in 1899, when war broke out between the Dutch-descended Boers of the interior and the coastally based British, he volunteered to lead an ambulance corps. Gandhi believed then, and up until 1919, that India was benefiting from being governed under the British constitution, and he repeatedly pointed out that arbitrary and racist legislation violated the principles of that constitution. When in 1906 a law was passed requiring every South African Indian to carry an identification pass, he led the community in a mass refusal to obey it. Shortly before his first jail term in 1906, he and a cousin coined the term “satyagraha” (“holding firmly to truth”) to indicate the nature of this non-violent fight against unjust laws, waged primarily by disobeying them and willingly suffering the hardships of imprisonment. By 1914 Gandhi’s expanding movement had produced the repeal of some repressive laws, and after laboring twenty years for justice and human dignity in South Africa Gandhi felt free to return to India.

Paralleling and reinforcing his growing experience in serving his community, Gandhi evolved in these years his own system of spiritual ideals and moral practices. Its roots lay in his mother's influence, childhood training in Vaishnava devotional prayer, exposure to Jain non-violence, and struggles to serve his parents while married to Kasturbai, his child bride, to whom he was married when they were both thirteen. Christian friends in London and South Africa had acquainted him with Jesus's teachings on non-violence, forgiveness, faith in God, and the need to love and serve others, as expressed especially in the "Sermon on the Mount." Tolstoy's writing and expression of these ideals, culminating in actual correspondence between the two men, impressed Gandhi greatly, as did his continuing study of the *Gītā* and other religious writings sent to him by friends in India and England. The deeper became his involvement in serving others, the more he felt the need to simplify his life. This need was reinforced by reading John Ruskin's *Unto This Last*. The circumstances of his involvement in the Zulu rebellion of 1906 prompted a vow of chastity. Letters and books sent from Bombay by his Jain friend Raychand strengthened his resolve to adopt these self-restraints, so as to hasten his soul's liberation from further rebirths. Thus the two paths of service and progress toward *moksha* began to converge.

Gandhi was forty-five when he returned to India, where he spent his remaining thirty-three years. His efforts to help the downtrodden in his society convinced him that it was only through identifying with and serving others that he could come closer to God. The villagers of India were his first love, for he believed that the "curse" of modern materialism was spreading outward from the coastal cities, contaminating India's great heritage of spiritual striving and simple living. He quickly responded to opportunities to lead villagers in opposing excessive taxes, but he also helped Ahmedabad urban workers in their 1918 strike against a wage reduction.

1919 was a difficult year. The Rowlatt Bills, announced early in the year, authorized harsh and sweeping powers for the colonial regime: trial without jury or right of appeal; preventive detention of anyone "threatening public safety," while "dangerous persons may be continuously detained." Possession of any "seditious document" was punishable by two years in prison, followed by another two years at the government's discretion. This arbitrariness shocked the country. Then, in April 1919, General Reginald Dyer, wishing to make an example of citizens who were disobeying the injunction against public assemblies, ordered his troops to fire at close range on a crowd enclosed in a public square, Jallianwala Bagh, in Amritsar. He killed 400 and wounded at least 1,200. This event, more than any other, caused the loss of the Raj's legitimacy in Gandhi's eyes and spurred him and the Congress to direct action.

Having formed an alliance with Mohamed and Shaukat Ali and other Muslim leaders, and convinced that pan-Indian grievances could be solved by the same means he had used in South Africa, Gandhi persuaded the Congress in

1919 to start a movement of non-cooperation with British rule and commerce. He hoped that his bringing together of national and Islamic issues would result in a Hindu–Muslim alliance that would hasten the end of British rule. The secularist Muslim leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah (see chapter 7)—who with Tilak had worked out in 1916 a united constitutional demand for India’s self-government—condemned Gandhi for his “extreme programme,” which “struck the imagination mostly of the inexperienced youth and the ignorant and the illiterate.” “All this,” Jinnah wrote, “means complete disorganization and chaos.”⁴ Gandhi nevertheless persisted in his plan, and insisted on strict discipline and non-violence within the first non-cooperation movement. When in 1922 villagers attacked and killed a group of Indian police officers, he held himself personally responsible. Against the advice of his closest advisers in the Congress, he called an immediate halt to the movement, and fasted for five days as penance for his failure to control it.

Although his dramatic program had won widespread support, awakened national pride, and checked the growth of terrorist methods, his plan to unify Hindus and Muslims collapsed with the non-cooperation movement. A rising tide of riots and killings between the two communities followed in the mid- and late 1920s. By 1930, Muslim support had notably declined; but a significant exception to this generalization emerged among Muslims who had joined the organization of the Khudai Khidmatgar (“Servants of God,” but commonly called the Surkh Posh, or “Red Shirts”). Led by Abdul Chaffar “Badshah” (“King”) Khan (1890–1988), and coming from the Northwest Frontier Province, this surprising brigade of satyagrahis brought more than one hundred thousand fresh Muslim recruits to the civil disobedience campaign in 1930. Badshah Khan was born in Peshawar, an area the British characterized as replete with violent cultural traditions; but this charismatic leader remained devoted to Islam and to Gandhi, as a principled practitioner of satyagraha. The intimate connection between these two dissimilar leaders, who came from such radically different regions and traditions of India, centered on their faith in non-violence. Whereas others who called themselves Gandhians employed satyagraha merely as a tactic of non-cooperation, Badshah Khan adopted it as his creed. When asked decades later to reflect on why he had embraced the independence movement so enthusiastically, he emphasized that it alone joined trustworthy political leadership with a force far more powerful than violence.⁵ Another exception to separatist trends among Muslims was the support given to the Congress by Deoband ulema led by Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani (see the introduction to chapter 7).

Opposition to Gandhi came not only from among unhappy minority communities, but also from Hindu revivalists, many of whom joined the Hindu Mahasabha (formed in 1915) and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) (founded in 1925). Although the former did not immediately enter electoral politics and the latter has long held back from direct political involvement, both were shaped by V. D. Savarkar’s formulation of Hindutva (presented in chapter 7 and

mentioned in selections from Godse below); both maintained that Hindus must organize and develop physical and military prowess in order to show themselves equal, if not superior, to other Indian communities.

When Gandhi called for a mass satyagraha campaign to protest a new tax on salt, he received considerable support from women, students, and the peasantry in general. More than sixty thousand satyagrahis filled the jails to overflowing. A truce resulted in unprecedented face-to-face talks between Gandhi and the British viceroy. The Conservative M. P. Winston Churchill called these meetings a “nauseating and humiliating spectacle”—that this “seditious fakir” should go “striding half-naked up the steps of the Viceroy’s palace, there to negotiate and parley on equal terms with the representative of the King-Emperor.”⁶

Nine months later a new and harsher viceroy jailed the Congress activists again, but Gandhi declared that he would fast to death in prison rather than accept the British plan to separate the voters and candidates of the lowest social group, the Untouchables, from the rest of the caste Hindus in future elections (as the Muslims had been separated since 1909). The news of Gandhi’s resistance stirred sympathy throughout India and the world, and moved some higher-caste Hindus to drop a few of their barriers against the supposedly polluting contact with those whom Gandhi termed *harijans* (“children of God”). On the fifth day of the fast the British gave in: they accepted a compromise worked out between Gandhi and the Untouchable leader Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, whose criticisms of Gandhi’s position on caste are presented in this chapter.

All through these years Gandhi was writing articles and letters. Although it was fashionable among some nationalists to denounce the media as imperialist propaganda, Gandhi made use of the press: he published ceaselessly, and attracted Indian and foreign journalists to publicize his cause. He delivered speeches on tours all over India in an effort to educate his countrymen on how to remedy their social, economic, political, and moral ills. Like Rammohan Roy and Sayyid Ahmad Khan, he cherished and made good use of the printing press and the relative freedom from censorship that Britain had brought to India; he founded, raised funds for, and was the main contributor to one weekly newspaper in South Africa (from 1903 to 1915) and four in India (from 1919 to 1948, with interruptions)—two in English and two in Gujarati.

In this sea of writings—now available in the hundred-volume *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*—Gandhi’s favorite words are “truth” and “non-violence.” The latter is clear, but the former complex. “Truth” meant not only factual knowledge but also what Thoreau suggested when he urged living life as a “pilgrimage to truth.” For Gandhi truth was a supreme being toward which every religious or political thought, word, and deed should be oriented. Moreover, he insisted that in this pursuit of truth, means and ends are inextricably interwoven. Selecting traditional values about the power of love and compassion, and combining them with the goal of freedom with justice, he forged an original synthesis of thought from Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Judaic,

and Muslim sources. His overriding aim was to attain not merely Indian independence, but also the personal goal of liberation (*moksha*). The genius of his political thought appeared in his creation of concepts like satyagraha and swaraj (self-rule) to describe emancipation of the self as well as the ideal system of government.⁷

Gandhi's political vision was not without challenges, nor was his life free from tragedy. In the 1930s Bengal's Subhas Chandra Bose and the communist M. N. Roy (both discussed below) argued for their distinctive alternatives to satyagraha. From 1940 to 1947, Muhammad Ali Jinnah and his Muslim League pressed successfully for separate states in those areas of British India where Muslims were in the majority. There were severe personal losses as well. In 1942 his chief secretary and closest friend, Mahadev Desai died, just after the British again jailed the entire Congress leadership (which had planned to mount another civil disobedience movement when Japan seemed about to invade India); in 1944, Kasturbai, his wife of sixty-two years, died in prison. After his release from prison, from 1944 to 1947 he tried desperately (though vainly) to halt the division of the subcontinent into the two nations of India and Pakistan. These personal and political crises culminated in 1946 and 1947 when he saw his life-long dream of harmony between Hindus and Muslims drown in the blood of massive riots and street violence between the two religious communities throughout northern India.

On August 15, 1947, the day a truncated British India finally gained its independence, Gandhi refused to join the ceremonies in New Delhi, remaining instead in Calcutta to continue his efforts to persuade the Muslims and Hindus there to live peacefully together. Two weeks later, as violence revived, an angry Hindu mob smashed its way into the Muslim house where he was staying; Gandhi started fasting the next day, saying "either there will be peace or I shall be dead."⁸ Peace came in three days. In January 1948 he fasted successfully again in Delhi to stop Hindu attacks on Muslims and to coerce his own Indian government into payment of large sums of money that were due to Pakistan. He prevailed, extracting both government payment and pledges of peace by leaders of all groups. This enabled him to end his fast; but on January 30, as he was en route to his regular evening prayer meeting, he was shot by Nathuram Godse, a Hindu extremist who believed him too lenient toward India's Muslims and Pakistan. Godse's speech at his trial, forcefully defending the assassination by expounding its essential rationale, is excerpted below.

"The light has gone out of our lives," said Jawaharlal Nehru to the nation. Sarojini Naidu—the distinguished poet who had been Gandhi's close associate since 1914, had led the salt march after his arrest in 1930, and had served as president of the Indian National Congress—reacted as Gandhi himself might have. When she saw millions mourning his cremation in Delhi, she cried: "What is all this snivelling about? Would you rather he died of decrepit old age or indigestion? This was the only death great enough for him." Later she remi-

nised, "Every speaker that spoke about him said, 'May his spirit rest in peace.' I said: 'O my father, do not curse him. Do not let his spirit rest in peace. Let every ash from the funeral pyre be dynamic and create in us a power to fulfill his orders with vigour and follow his example.'"⁹

Writings of Mahatma Gandhi

HIND SWARAJ AND THE PROPER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEANS AND END, POWER, AND FREEDOM

In 1909, as Gandhi turned forty, he wrote the first cohesive statement of his thought, entitled *Hind Swaraj*, or *Indian Home Rule*. It established his status as a highly original political thinker. He drew unprecedented conceptual connections between the theory of means and ends, power (satyagraha), and freedom (swaraj). The following segments from *Hind Swaraj* show the importance he attached to the issue of religious harmony: even at this time in South Africa, he deemed urgent the problem of tension between religious communities. From the beginning of his political career, therefore, he made religious freedom and mutual respect central principles. *Hind Swaraj* is written in the form of a Socratic dialogue between a READER, representing the school of Indian terrorism, and an EDITOR, presenting his own ideas.

READER: But I am impatient to hear your answer to my question. Has the introduction of Mahomedanism not unmade the nation?

EDITOR: India cannot cease to be one nation because people belonging to different religions live in it. The introduction of foreigners does not necessarily destroy the nation, they merge in it. A country is one nation only when such a condition obtains in it. That country must have a faculty for assimilation. India has ever been such a country. In reality, there are as many religions as there are individuals, but those who are conscious of the spirit of nationality do not interfere with one another's religion. If they do, they are not fit to be considered a nation. If the Hindus believe that India should be peopled only by Hindus, they are living in dreamland. The Hindus, the Mahomedans, the Parsees and the Christians who have made India their country are fellow countrymen and they will have to live in unity if only for their own interest. In no part of the world are one nationality and one religion synonymous terms: nor has it ever been so in India.

[From *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, ed. Anthony J. Parel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 51–53.]

Gandhi then argued that achieving a truly emancipated India (swaraj in the fullest sense) depended entirely on adopting the right means (satyagraha) to that end:

HOW CAN INDIA BECOME FREE?

READER: I appreciate your views about civilization. I will have to think over them. I cannot take in all at once. What, then, holding the views you do, would you suggest for freeing India?

EDITOR: I do not expect my views to be accepted all of a sudden. My duty is to place them before readers like yourself. Time can be trusted to do the rest. We have already examined the conditions for freeing India, but we have done so indirectly; we will now do so directly. It is a world-known maxim that the removal of the cause of a disease results in the removal of the disease itself. Similarly, if the cause of India's slavery be removed, India can become free.

READER: If Indian civilization is, as you say, the best of all, how do you account for India's slavery?

EDITOR: This civilization is unquestionably the best, but it is to be observed that all civilizations have been on their trial. That civilization which is permanent outlives it. Because the sons of India were found wanting, its civilization has been placed in jeopardy. But its strength is to be seen in its ability to survive the shock. Moreover, the whole of India is not touched. Those alone who have been affected by western civilization have become enslaved. We measure the universe by our own miserable foot-rule. When we are slaves, we think that the whole universe is enslaved. Because we are in abject condition, we think that the whole of India is in that condition. As a matter of fact, it is not so, but it is as well to impute our slavery to the whole of India. But if we bear in mind the above fact, we can see that, if we become free, India is free. And in this thought you have a definition of Swaraj. It is Swaraj when we learn to rule ourselves. It is, therefore, in the palm of our hands. Do not consider this Swaraj to be like a dream. Here there is no idea of sitting still. The Swaraj that I wish to picture before you and me is such that, after we have once realized it, we will endeavour to the end of our lifetime to persuade others to do likewise. But such Swaraj has to be experienced by each one for himself. One drowning man will never save another. Slaves ourselves, it would be a mere pretension to think of freeing others. Now you will have seen that it is not necessary for us to have as our goal the expulsion of the English. If the English become Indianised, we can accommodate them. If they wish to remain in India along with their civilization, there is no room for them. It lies with us to bring about such a state of things.

READER: It is impossible that Englishmen should ever become Indianised.

EDITOR: To say that is equivalent to saying that the English have no humanity in them. And it is really beside the point whether they become so or not. If we keep our own house in order, only those who are fit to live in it will remain, others will leave of their own accord. Such things occur within the experience of all of us.

READER: But it has not occurred in history.

EDITOR: To believe that what has not occurred in history will not occur at all is to argue disbelief in the dignity of man. At any rate, it behooves us to try what appeals to our reason. All countries are not similarly conditioned. The condition of India is unique. Its strength is immeasurable. We need not, therefore, refer to the history of other countries. I have drawn attention to the fact that, when other civilizations have succumbed the Indian has survived many a shock.

READER: I cannot follow this. There seems little doubt that we shall have to expel the English by force of arms. So long as they are in the country, we cannot rest. One of our poets says that slaves cannot even dream of happiness. We are day by day becoming weakened owing to the presence of the English. Our greatness is gone; our people look like terrified men. The English are in the country like a blight which we must remove by every means.

EDITOR: In your excitement, you have forgotten all we have been considering. We brought the English, and we keep them. Why do you forget that our adoption of their civilization makes their presence in India at all possible? Your hatred against them ought to be transferred to their civilisation. But let us assume that we have to drive away the English by fighting, how is that to be done?

READER: In the same way as Italy did it. . . .

ITALY AND INDIA

EDITOR: India can fight like Italy only when she has arms. You have not considered this problem at all. The English are splendidly armed; that does not frighten me, but it is clear that, to pit ourselves against them in arms, thousands of Indians must be armed. If such a thing be possible, how many years will it take? Moreover, to arm India on a large scale is to Europeanise it. Then her condition will be just as pitiable as that of Europe. This means, in short, that India must accept European civilization, and, if that is what we want, the best thing is that we have among us those who are so well trained in that civilization. We will then fight for a few rights, will get what we can, and so pass our days. But the fact is that the Indian nation will not adopt arms, and it is well that it does not.

READER: You are over-assuming facts. All need not be armed. At first, we will assassinate a few Englishmen and strike terror; then, a few men who will have been armed will fight openly. We may have to lose a quarter of a million men, more or less, but we will regain our land. We will undertake guerrilla warfare, and defeat the English.

EDITOR: That is to say, you want to make the holy land of India unholy. Do you not tremble to think of freeing India by assassination? What we need to do is sacrifice ourselves. It is a cowardly thought, that of killing others. Whom do you suppose to free by assassination? The millions of India do not desire it. Those who are intoxicated by the wretched modern civilization think these

things. Those who will rise to power by murder will certainly not make the nation happy. Those who believe that India has gained by Dhingra's¹⁰ act and such other acts in India make a serious mistake. Dhingra was a patriot, but his love was blind. He gave his body in a wrong way; its ultimate result can only be mischievous.

READER: But you will admit that the English have been frightened by these murders, and that Lord Morley's reforms are due to fear.

EDITOR: The English are both a timid and a brave nation. She is, I believe, easily influenced by the use of gunpowder. It is possible that Lord Morley has granted the reforms through fear but what is granted under fear can be retained only so long as the fear lasts.

BRUTE FORCE

READER: This is a new doctrine: that what is gained through fear is retained only while the fear lasts. Surely, what is given will not be withdrawn?

EDITOR: Not so. The Proclamation of 1857 was given at the end of a revolt, and for the purpose of preserving peace. When peace was secured and people became simple-minded, its full effect was toned down. If I ceased stealing for fear of punishment, I would recommence the operation as soon as the fear is withdrawn from me. This is almost a universal experience. We have assumed that we can get men to do things by force and, therefore, we use force.

READER: Will you not admit that you are arguing against yourself? You know that what the English obtained in their own country they have obtained by using brute force. I know you have argued that what they have obtained is useless, but that does not affect my argument. They wanted useless things, and they got them. My point is that their desire was fulfilled. What does it matter what means they adopted? Why should we not obtain our goal, which is good, by any means whatsoever, even by using violence? Shall I think of the means when I have to deal with a thief in the house? My duty is to drive him out anyhow. You seem to admit that we have received nothing, and that we shall receive nothing by petitioning. Why, then, may we not do so by using brute force? And, to retain what we may receive, we shall keep up the fear by using the same force to the extent that it may be necessary. You will not find fault with a continuance of force to prevent a child from thrusting its foot into fire? Somehow or other, we have to gain our end.

EDITOR: Your reasoning is plausible. It has deluded many. I have used similar arguments before now. But I think I know better now, and I shall endeavor to undeceive you. Let us first take the argument that we are justified in gaining our end by using brute force, because the English gained theirs by using similar means. It is perfectly true that they used brute force, and that it is possible for us to do likewise, but, by using similar means, we can get only the same thing that they got. You will admit that we do not want that. Your belief that there is no

connection between the means and the end is a great mistake. Through that mistake even men who have been considered religious have committed grievous crimes. Your reasoning is the same as saying that we can get a rose through planting a noxious weed. If I want to cross the ocean, I can do so only by means of a vessel; if I were to use a cart for that purpose, both the cart and I would soon find the bottom. "As is the God, so is the votary" is a maxim worth considering. Its meaning has been distorted, and men have gone astray. The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree; and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree. I am not likely to obtain the result flowing from the worship of God by laying myself prostrate before Satan. If, therefore, anyone were to say: "I want to worship God, it does not matter that I do so by means of Satan" it would be set down as ignorant folly. We reap exactly as we sow.

[From *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, 66–81.]

A DISAGREEMENT WITH B. G. TILAK OVER SWARAJ

Once Gandhi returned to India and, after 1919, climbed to political power, he kept his principle of purity of means prominent, as evidenced in this exchange with his chief rival, B. G. Tilak (see chapter 5).

For as [Indian National Congress] party formation progresses, we suppose it would be considered quite the proper thing for party leaders to use others as tools. . . . L. [=Lokamanya, "admired by the people"] Tilak represents a definite school of thought of which he makes no secret. He considers that everything is fair in politics. We have joined issue with him in that conception of political life. We consider that political life of the country will become thoroughly corrupt if we import Western tactics and methods. We believe that nothing but the strictest adherence to honesty, fairplay and charity can advance the true interests of the country.

[*Complete Works of Mahatma Gandhi* [CWMG]
(Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information
and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1961), 6:484.]

On January 18, 1920, Tilak replied from Poona in a letter which Gandhi duly published.

I am sorry to see that in your article on "Reforms Resolution" in the last issue, you have represented me as holding that I considered "everything fair in politics." I write this to you to say that my view is not correctly represented therein. Politics is a game of worldly people and not of sadhus, and instead of the maxim "Overcome anger by loving kindness, evil by good" as preached by Buddha, I prefer to rely on the maxim of Shri Krishna "In whatsoever way any come to me, in that same way I grant them favor." That explains the whole difference

and also the meaning of my phrase “responsive cooperation.” Both methods are equally honest and righteous but the one is more suited to this world than the other. Any further explanation about the difference will be found in my *Gita Rahasya*.

[CWMG 16:490–491.]

Gandhi then concluded the correspondence with this rejoinder.

I naturally feel the greatest diffidence about joining issue with the Lokamanya in matters involving questions of interpretation of religious works. But there are things in or about which instinct transcends even interpretation. For me there is no conflict between the two texts quoted by the Lokamanya. The Buddhist text lays down an eternal principle. The text from the *Bhagavad Gita* shows to me how the principle of conquering hate by love, untruth by truth, can and must be applied. If it be true that God metes out the same measure to us that we mete out to others, it follows that if we would escape condign [appropriate] punishment, we may not return anger but gentleness even against anger. And this is the law not for the unworldly but essentially for the worldly. With deference to the Lokamanya, I venture to say that it betrays mental laziness to think that the world is not for sadhus. The epitome of all religions is to promote *purushartha*, and *purushartha* is nothing but a desperate attempt to become sadhu, i.e., to become a gentleman in every sense of the term.

Finally, when I wrote the sentence about “everything being fair in politics” according to Lokamanya’s creed, I had in mind his oft-repeated quotation “evil unto evil.”

To me it enunciates bad law. And I shall not despair of the Lokamanya with all his acumen agreeably surprising India one day with a philosophical dissertation proving the falsity of the doctrine. In any case I pit the experience of a third of a century against the doctrine underlying “evil unto evil.” The true law is “truth even unto evil.”

[CWMG 16:490–491.]

Still later, in July 1921—shortly after Tilak died and the Mahatma’s leadership of the Congress was secure—Gandhi was at pains to emphasize, “I am conscious that my method is not Mr. Tilak’s method.”¹¹

GANDHI BEFORE THE BRITISH: AT THE DISORDERS INQUIRY COMMITTEE OF 1920

The country’s condition was dramatically transformed in the spring of 1919 when, under Gandhi’s leadership, a mass movement was born. From April 6, 1919, when “Satyagraha Day” was observed throughout India to initiate non-violent action, to August 1, 1920, when a second stage of non-cooperation began with his announcing a

systematic and more prolonged attack, Gandhi's method was tested. Most surprising was how the villages of India were mobilized through an unprecedented combination of leadership, ideology, and organization. Gandhi's achievement at the helm of the Congress understandably alarmed the British authorities, both in England and in India. A committee chaired by Lord Hunter was appointed to investigate the "disorders." Included here is a sampling of Gandhi's testimony before this committee, which he gave on January 8, 1920, two years before he was arrested for sedition and imprisoned in March 1922. His defense indicates how firmly he feels that he has captured the moral high ground of the struggle. His critique of passive resistance probably refers to the disobedience strategy of Aurobindo Ghose (see chapter 5, above); Gandhi associated passive resistance with internal violence—what he called *duragraha* (holding on to one's selfish, narrow interest rather than to truth and the common interest).

By the President [Lord Hunter presiding]:

Q. Mr. Gandhi, we have been informed that you are the author of the satyagraha movement?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. I would like you to give us an explanation of what that movement is.

[A.] It is a movement intended to replace methods of violence. It is a movement based entirely on truth. It is, as I have conceived it, an extension of the domestic law on the political field, and my own experience has led me to the conclusion that that movement and that movement alone can rid India of the possibilities of violence spreading throughout the length and breadth of the land for the redress of grievances, supposed or real. . . .

For the past thirty years I have been preaching and practicing satyagraha. The principles of satyagraha, as I know it today, constitute a gradual evolution.

Satyagraha differs from passive resistance [e.g., *duragraha*] as North Pole from South. The latter has been conceived as a weapon of the weak and does not exclude the use of physical force or violence for the purpose of gaining one's end, whereas the former has been conceived as a weapon of the strongest and excludes the use of violence in any shape or form.

The term "satyagraha" was coined by me in South Africa to express the force that the Indians there used for full eight years and it was coined in order to distinguish it from the movement then going on in the United Kingdom and South Africa under the name of passive resistance.

Its root meaning is holding on to truth, hence truth-force. I have also called it love-force or soul-force. In the application of satyagraha, I discovered in the earliest stages that pursuit of truth did not admit of violence being inflicted on one's opponent but that he must be weaned from error by patience and sympathy. For what appears to be truth to the one may appear to be error to the other. And patience means self-suffering. So the doctrine came to mean vindication of truth, not by infliction of suffering on the opponent, but on one's self.

But on the political field, the struggle on behalf of the people mostly consists in opposing error in the shape of unjust laws. When you have failed to bring the

error home to the law-giver by way of petitions and the like, the only remedy open to you, if you do not wish to submit to error, is to compel him by physical force to yield to you or by suffering in your own person by inviting the penalty for the breach of the law. Hence satyagraha largely appears to the public as civil disobedience or civil resistance. It is civil in the sense that it is not criminal.

The law-breaker breaks the law surreptitiously and tries to avoid the penalty; not so the civil resister. He ever obeys the laws of the State to which he belongs not out of fear of the sanctions but because he considers them to be good for the welfare of society. But there come occasions, generally rare, when he considers certain laws to be so unjust as to render obedience to them a dishonour. He then openly and civilly breaks them and quietly suffers the penalty for their breach. And in order to register his protest against the action of the law-givers, it is open to him to withdraw his cooperation from the State by disobeying such other laws whose breach does not involve moral turpitude.

In my opinion, the beauty and efficacy of satyagraha are so great and the doctrine so simple that it can be preached even to children. It was preached by me to thousands of men, women and children commonly called indentured Indians, with excellent results.

When the Rowlatt Bills were published I felt that they were so restrictive of human liberty that they must be resisted to the utmost. I observed too that the opposition to them was universal among Indians. I submit that no State however despotic has the right to enact laws which are repugnant to the whole body of the people, much less a government guided by constitutional usage and precedent such as the Indian Government. I felt too that the oncoming agitation needed a definite direction if it was neither to collapse nor to run into violent channels.

I ventured therefore to present satyagraha to the country emphasizing its civil resistance aspect. And as it is purely an inward and purifying movement, I suggested the observance of fast, prayer and suspension of all work for one day—the 6th of April. There was a magnificent response throughout the length and breadth of India, even in little villages, although there was no organization and no great previous preparation. The idea was given to the public as soon as it was conceived. On the 6th April there was no violence used by the people and no collision with the police worth naming. The hartal [strike] was purely voluntary and spontaneous. I attach hereto the letter in which the idea was announced. [*Gandhi submits his letter of March 23, 1919, as evidence.*]

[CWMG 16:368–370, 378.]

Lord Hunter continued his questioning.

Q. I do not wish to give you advice Mr. Gandhi, I know that you would not take it, if I did. But this satyagraha is a rather dangerous campaign.

[A.] I wish I could disabuse the Committee really of this attitude that it is a dangerous campaign. If you will conceive the campaign as designed in order to

rid the country of the school of violence, then you will share the same concern that I have that, at any cost, a movement of this character should remain in the country and purify it certainly. . . .

Q. If an honest opponent differs from your view, you cannot expect to satisfy him of the rightness of your cause all of a sudden. You must do so by degrees?

[A.] Yes.

Q. Is not refusing to obey that or any other law you choose to select a rather drastic way of attempting to do that?

[A.] I respectfully differ. When I find that even my father has imposed upon me a law which is repugnant to my conscience, I think it is the least drastic course that I adopt by respectfully telling him, "Father, I cannot obey this." I do nothing but justice to my father when I do that. . . . If it is not wrong for me to say so to my father, there is nothing wrong for me to say so to a friend or to a Government. . . .

Q. Do you not create a condition of very great danger to peace and order?

[A.] On the contrary, I promote peace. And I have done it myself on the 6th of April, because I was there in Bombay, and there was some fear of people themselves offering violence. And I am here to tell you that no violence, no real violence was offered by the people, because people were being told the true nature of satyagraha. It was an amazing sight for me to see thousands of people behaving in a perfectly peaceful manner. That would not have been the case if the satyagraha doctrine had not been preached in the right key. It all depends on the doctrine of satyagraha or the doctrine of hate in the form of satyagraha.¹² But to enforce satyagraha and call upon those who are engaged in hartal to break the law is a different application and it is that which I am trying to distinguish. . . .

Q. Subsequently to your arrest, very unfortunately serious incidents occurred in Delhi and the Punjab and also in Ahmedabad here? The only matter we have got to deal with here is as regards Ahmedabad itself. . . .

[A.] I would venture to present this thing in connection with these riots. I consider that the action of this mob, whether in Ahmedabad or in Viramgam, was totally unjustified, and I have thought that it was a very sad thing that they lost self-control.¹³ I do not wish to offer the slightest defense for the acts of the mob, but at the same time I would like to say that the people amongst whom, rightly or wrongly, I was popular were put to such severe stress by Government who should have known better. I think the Government committed an unpardonable error of judgment and the mob committed a similar unpardonable error, but more unpardonable on the part of the mob than on the part of the Government. I wish to say that also as a satyagrahi, I cannot find a single thing done by the mob which I can defend or justify. No amount of provocation, however great, could justify people from doing as they have done. It has been suggested to me that all those who did it were not satyagrahis. That is true. But they chose to take part in the satyagraha movement and came under the satyagraha discipline. These were the terms in which I have spoken to the people; and it

gives me the greatest pleasure and also pain to declare my settled conviction before this Committee also. I have said this elsewhere. I would proceed further with what I have come to know. . . .

As soon as I came here I endeavoured to do what I was capable of doing in order to repair the mischief and the error, as I sensed at the time. . . .

Q. With regard to your satyagraha doctrine, as far as I am able to understand it, it involves a pursuit of truth?

[A.] Yes.

Q. And in the pursuit of truth to invite suffering on oneself and not to cause violence to anybody else?

[A.] Yes.

Q. That I understand is the main principle underlying?

[A.] That is so.

Q. Now in that doctrine, who is to determine the truth? That individual himself?

[A.] Yes, that individual himself.

Q. So each one that adopts this doctrine has to determine for himself what is the truth that he will pursue?

[A.] Most decidedly.

Q. And in doing that different individuals will take very different views as to what is the truth to be pursued?

[A.] Certainly.

Q. It might, on that footing, cause considerable confusion?

[A.] I won't accept that. It need not lead to any confusion if you accept the proposition that a man is honestly in search after truth and that he will never inflict violence upon him who holds to truth. Then there is no possibility of confusion.

Q. A man may honestly strive after truth, but however honestly a man may strive, his notions of truth will be quite different from the notions of truth of some other people or his intellectual equipment may be of such a character that his conclusion as regards truth may be entirely opposite to the conclusion of somebody else?

[A.] That was precisely the reason why in answer to Lord Hunter I suggested that non-violence was the necessary corollary to the acceptance of satyagraha doctrine. . . .

Had the Government, in an unwise manner, not prevented me from entering Delhi and so compelled me to disobey their orders, I feel certain that Ahmedabad and Viramgam would have remained free from the horrors of the last week. In other words, satyagraha has neither been the cause nor the occasion of the upheaval. If anything, the presence of satyagrahis has acted as a check, ever so light, upon the previously existing lawless elements. . . . I would be untrue to satyagraha if I allowed it, by any action of mine, to be used as an occasion for feeding violence, for embittering the relations between the English and the

Indians. Our satyagraha must, therefore, now consist in ceaselessly helping the authorities in all the ways available to us as satyagrahis to restore order and to curb lawlessness. We can turn the tragedies going on before us to good account, if we could but succeed in gaining the adherence of the masses to the fundamental principles of satyagraha.

Satyagraha is like a banyan-tree with innumerable branches. Civil disobedience is one such branch. Satya (truth) and ahimsa (non-violence) together make the parent trunk from which all the innumerable branches shoot out. We have found by bitter experience that, whilst in an atmosphere of lawlessness, civil disobedience found ready acceptance. Satya (truth) and ahimsa (non-violence), from which alone civil disobedience can worthily spring, have commanded little or no respect. Ours then is a Herculean task, but we may not shirk it. We must fearlessly spread the doctrine of satya and ahimsa, and then and not till then shall we be able to undertake mass-satyagraha. My attitude towards the Rowlatt legislation remains unchanged.

[CWMG 16:381, 383, 387, 389–390, 408–409, 426–427.]

THE CRIME OF CHAURI CHAURA

In February 1922, after a group claiming to be Gandhians burned and hacked to death a group of Indian police officers in a small town named Chauri Chaura in Uttar Pradesh, Gandhi suspended the movement, judging that India was not yet ready to meet the standards of satyagraha he imposed. He immediately explained his reasons to the country.

God has been abundantly kind to me. He has warned me [again] that there is not as yet in India that truthful and non-violent atmosphere which and which alone can justify mass disobedience which can be at all described as civil, which means gentle, truthful, humble, knowing, wilful yet loving, never criminal and hateful. . . .

God spoke clearly through Chauri Chaura. I understand that the constables who were so brutally hacked to death had given much provocation. They had even gone back upon the word just given by the Inspector that [protestors] would not be molested, but when the procession had passed the stragglers were interfered with and abused by the constables. The former cried out for help. The mob returned. The constables opened fire. The little ammunition they had was exhausted and they retired to the *Thana* [police station] for safety. The mob, my informant tells me, therefore set fire to the *Thana*. The self-imprisoned constables had to come out for dear life and as they did so, they were hacked to pieces and the mangled remains were thrown into the raging flames.

It is claimed that no non-co-operation volunteer had a hand in the brutality and that the mob had not only the immediate provocation but they had also general knowledge of the high-handed tyranny of the police in that district.

No provocation can possibly justify the brutal murder of men who had been rendered defenseless and who had virtually thrown themselves on the mercy of the mob. And when India claims to be non-violent and hopes to mount the throne of Liberty through non-violent means, mob-violence even in answer to grave provocation is a bad augury. . . . Non-violent attainment of self-government presupposes a non-violent control over the violent elements in the country. Non-violent non-co-operators can only succeed when they have succeeded in attaining control over the hooligans of India, in other words, when the latter also have learned patriotically or religiously to refrain from their violent activities at least whilst the campaign of non-co-operation is going on. The tragedy of Chauri Chaura, therefore, roused me thoroughly. . . .

I put my doubts and troubles before the Working Committee and other associates whom I found near me. They did not all agree with me at first. Some of them probably do not even now agree with me. But never has a man been blessed, perhaps, with colleagues and associates so considerate and forgiving as I have. They understood my difficulty and patiently followed my argument. The result is before the public in the shape of the resolutions of the Working Committee. The drastic reversal of practically the whole of the aggressive programme may be politically unsound and unwise, but there is no doubt that it is religiously sound, and I venture to assure the doubters that the country will have gained by my humiliation and confession of error.

The only virtue I want to claim is Truth and Non-Violence. I lay no claim to superhuman powers. I want none. I wear the same corruptible flesh that the weakest of my fellow beings wears and am therefore as liable to err as any. My services have many limitations, but God has up to now blessed them in spite of the imperfections.

For, confession of error is like a broom that sweeps away dirt and leaves the surface cleaner than before, I feel stronger for my confession. And the cause must prosper for the retracing. Never has man reached his destination by persistence in deviation from the straight path. . . .

I am in the unhappy position of a surgeon proved skill-less to deal with an admittedly dangerous case. I must either abdicate or acquire greater skill. . . .

All fasting and all penance must as far as possible be secret. But my fasting is both a penance and a punishment, and a punishment has to be public. It is penance for me and punishment for those whom I try to serve, for whom I love to live and would equally love to die. They have unintentionally sinned against the laws of the Congress though they were sympathizers if not actually connected with it. Probably they hacked the constables—their countrymen and fellow beings—with my name on their lips. The only way love punishes is by suffering. I cannot even wish them to be arrested. But I would let them know that I would suffer for their breach of the Congress creed. I would advise those who feel guilty and repentant to hand themselves voluntarily to the Government for punishment and make a clean confession. I hope that the workers in the Gorakhpur

district will leave no stone unturned to find out the evil-doers and urge them to deliver themselves into custody. But whether the murderers accept my advice or not, I would like them to know that they have seriously interfered with swaraj operations, that in being the cause of the postponement of the movement in Bardoli, they have injured the very cause they probably intended to serve. I would like them to know, too, that this movement is not a cloak or a preparation for violence. I would, at any rate, suffer every humiliation, every torture, absolute ostracism and death itself to prevent the movement from becoming violent or a precursor of violence. I make my penance public also because I am now denying myself the opportunity of sharing their lot with the prisoners. The immediate issue has again shifted. We can no longer press for the withdrawal of notifications or discharge of prisoners. They and we must suffer for the crime of Chauri Chaura. The incident proves, whether we wish it or no, the unity of life. . . . By strict discipline and purification we regain the moral confidence required. . . .

[CWMG 22:415, 416–417, 419, 420–421.]

THE GREAT TRIAL: MARCH 1922

On March 18, 1922, Gandhi was formally charged in a British court with exciting or attempting to excite disaffection toward His Majesty's Government through his satyagraha movement. To this Gandhi readily pleaded guilty; he gave the following testimony to his support his position.

It is the most painful duty with me, but I have to discharge that duty knowing the responsibility that rests upon me, and I wish to endorse all the blame that the learned Advocate-General has thrown on my shoulders in connection with the Bombay, the Madras and the Chauri Chaura occurrences. Thinking over these deeply and sleeping over them night after night, it is impossible to dissociate myself from the diabolical crimes of Chauri Chaura or the mad outrages in Bombay and Madras. He is quite right when he says that, as a man of responsibility, a man having received a fair share of education, having had a fair share of experience of this world, I should know the consequences of every one of my acts. I knew that I was playing with fire. I ran the risk and, if I was set free, I would still do the same. I know that I was feeling it so every day and I have felt it also this morning that I would have failed in my duty if I did not say what I said here just now.

I wanted to avoid violence. I want to avoid violence. Non-violence is the first article of my faith. It is also the last article of my creed. But I had to make my choice. I had either to submit to a system which I considered had done an irreparable harm to my country, or incur the risk of the mad fury of my people bursting forth when they understood the truth from my lips. I know that my people have sometimes gone mad; I am deeply sorry for it. I am, therefore, here to submit not to a light penalty but to the highest penalty. I do not ask for mercy.

I do not ask for any extenuating act of clemency. I am here to invite and cheerfully submit to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is a deliberate crime and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen. The only course open to you, the Judge, is as I am just going to say in my statement, either to resign your post, or inflict on me the severest penalty, if you believe that the system and the law you are assisting to administer are good for the people of this country and that my activity is therefore injurious to the public weal. I do not expect that kind of conversion, but by the time I have finished with my statement, you will, perhaps, have a glimpse of what is raging within my breast to run this maddest risk that a sane man can run.

STATEMENT

I owe it perhaps to the Indian public and to the public in England, to placate which this prosecution is mainly taken up, that I should explain why, from a staunch loyalist and co-operator, I have become an uncompromising disaffectionist and non-co-operator. To the Court, too, I should say why I plead guilty to the charge of promoting disaffection towards the Government established by law in India.

My public life began in 1893 in South Africa in troubled weather. My first contact with British authority in that country was not of a happy character. I discovered that as a man and an Indian I had no rights. More correctly, I discovered that I had no rights as a man because I was an Indian.

But I was not baffled. I thought that this treatment of Indians was an excrescence upon a system that was intrinsically and mainly good. I gave the Government my voluntary and hearty co-operation, criticizing it freely where I felt it was faulty, but never wishing its destruction. Consequently, when the existence of the Empire was threatened in 1899 by the Boer challenge, I offered my services to it, raised a volunteer ambulance corps and served at several actions that took place for the relief of Ladysmith. Similarly in 1906, at the time of the Zulu revolt, I raised a stretcher-bearer party and served till the end of the rebellion. . . .

In all these efforts at service, I was actuated by the belief that it was possible by such services to gain a status of full equality in the Empire of my countrymen.

The first shock came in the shape of the Rowlatt Act, a law designed to rob the people of all real freedom. I felt called upon to lead an intensive agitation against it. Then followed the Punjab horrors beginning with the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh [on April 13, 1919 in Amritsar] and culminating in crawling orders, public floggings and other indescribable humiliations. . . .

I came reluctantly to the conclusion that the British connection had made India more helpless than she ever was before, politically and economically. . . .

Little do town-dwellers know how the semi-starved masses of India are slowly sinking to lifelessness. Little do they know that their miserable comfort

represents the brokerage they get for the work they do for the foreign exploiter, that the profits and the brokerage are sucked from the masses. Little do they realize that the Government established by law in British India is carried on for this exploitation of the masses. No sophistry, no jugglery in figures can explain away the evidence that the skeletons in many villages present to the naked eye. I have no doubt whatsoever that both England and the town-dwellers of India will have to answer, if there is a God above, for this crime against humanity which is perhaps unequalled in history. The law itself in this country has been used to serve the foreign exploiter. My unbiassed examination of the Punjab Martial Law cases has led me to believe that at least ninety-five per cent of convictions were wholly bad. My experience of political cases in India leads one to the conclusion that in nine out of every ten cases the condemned men were totally innocent. Their crime consisted in the love of their country. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, justice has been denied to Indians as against Europeans in the Courts of India. This is not an exaggerated picture. It is the experience of almost every Indian who has had anything to do with such cases. In my opinion, the administration of the law is thus prostituted consciously or unconsciously for the benefit of the exploiter.

The greatest misfortune is that Englishmen and their Indian associates in the administration of the country do not know that they are engaged in the crime I have attempted to describe. I am satisfied that many English and Indian officials honestly believe that they are administering one of the best systems devised in the world and that India is making steady though slow progress. They do not know that a subtle but effective system of terrorism and an organized display of force on the one hand, and the deprivation of all powers of retaliation or self-defence on the other, have emasculated the people and induced in them the habit of simulation. This awful habit has added to the ignorance and the self-deception of the administration. Section 124A under which I am happily charged is perhaps the prince among the political sections of the Indian Penal Code designed to suppress the liberty of the citizen. Affection cannot be manufactured or regulated by law. . . . I have no personal ill will against any single administrator, much less can I have any disaffection towards the King's person. But I hold it to be a virtue to be disaffected towards a Government which in its totality has done more harm to India than any previous system. . . .

In fact, I believe that I have rendered a service to India and England by showing in non-co-operation the way out of the unnatural state in which both are living. In my humble opinion, non-co-operation with evil is as much a duty as is co-operation with good. But, in the past, non-co-operation has been deliberately expressed in violence to the evil-doer. I am endeavouring to show to my countrymen that violent non-co-operation only multiplies evil and that, as evil can only be sustained by violence, withdrawal of support of evil requires complete abstention from violence. Non-violence implies voluntary submission to

the penalty for non-co-operation with evil. I am here, therefore, to invite and submit cheerfully to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is a deliberate crime and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen.

[CWMG 23:114–115, 116, 117–119.]

What follows are first the judgment by Justice R. S. Broomfield, and then Gandhi's response.

Justice Broomfield: Mr. Gandhi, you have made my task easy in one way by pleading guilty to the charge. Nevertheless what remains, namely, the determination of a just sentence, is perhaps as difficult a proposition as a judge in this country could have to face. The law is no respecter of persons. Nevertheless, it will be impossible to ignore the fact that you are in a different category from any person I have ever tried or am likely to have to try. It would be impossible to ignore the fact that, in the eyes of millions of your countrymen, you are a great patriot and a great leader. Even those who differ from you in politics look upon you as a man of high ideals and of noble and of even saintly life. I have to deal with you in one character only. It is not my duty and I do not presume to judge or criticize you in any other character. It is my duty to judge you as a man subject to the law, who has by his own admission broken the law and committed what to an ordinary man must appear to be grave offences against the State. I do not forget that you have constantly preached against violence and that you have on many occasions, as I am willing to believe, done much to prevent violence, but having regard to the nature of your political teaching and the nature of many of those to whom it is addressed, how you could have continued to believe that violence would not be the inevitable consequence it passes my capacity to understand. . . .

Gandhi: . . . So far as the sentence itself is concerned, I certainly consider that it is as light as any judge would inflict on me, and so far as the whole proceedings are concerned, I must say that I could not have expected greater courtesy.

[CWMG 23:119, 120.]

CONSTRUCTIVE WORK IN THE MID 1920s

HINDU–MUSLIM TENSION, ITS CAUSE AND CURE: TIRED OF NON-VIOLENCE

Gandhi was in prison from 1922 to 1924. After his release, he concentrated on the program of social reforms that he called “constructive work” and *swadeshi*. This “constructive work” sought to achieve Hindu–Muslim unity, the abolition of Untouchability, women's equality, and the uplift of villages, especially through the improvement

of handicraft industries like spinning and weaving of cotton cloth (khadi). These social reforms, he insisted, were prerequisites for swaraj.

Two years ago, a Mussalman friend said to me in all sincerity, "I do not believe [in] your non-violence. At least, I would not have my Mussalmans to learn it. Violence is the law of life. I would not have swaraj by non-violence as you define the latter. I must hate my enemy." This friend is an honest man. I entertain great regard for him. Much the same has been reported of another very great Mussalman friend of mine. The report may be untrue, but the reporter himself is not an untrue man. . . .

Nor is this repugnance to non-violence confined to Mussalmans. Hindu friends have said the same thing, if possible, with greater vehemence. My claim to Hinduism has been rejected by some, because I believe [in] and advance non-violence in its extreme form. They say that I am a Christian in disguise. I have been even seriously told that I am distorting the meaning of the *Gita* when I ascribe to that great poem the teaching of unadulterated non-violence. Some of my Hindu friends tell me that killing is a duty enjoined by the *Gita* under certain circumstances. A very learned Shastri only the other day scornfully rejected my interpretation of the *Gita* and said that there was no warrant for the opinion held by some commentators that the *Gita* represented the eternal duel between forces of evil and good, and inculcated the duty of eradicating evil within us without hesitation, without tenderness.

I state these opinions against non-violence in detail, because it is necessary to understand them if we would understand the solution I have to offer. What I see around me today is, therefore, a reaction against the spread of non-violence. I feel the wave of violence coming. The Hindu-Muslim tension is an acute phase of this tiredness. . . .

My religion is a matter solely between my Maker and myself. If I am a Hindu, I cannot cease to be one even though I may be disowned by the whole of the Hindu population. I do, however, suggest that non-violence is the end of all religions. . . .

But I have never presented to India that extreme form of non-violence, if only because I do not regard myself fit enough to re-deliver that ancient message. Though my intellect has fully understood and grasped it, it has not as yet become part of my whole being. My strength lies in my asking people to do nothing that I have not tried repeatedly in my own life. I am then asking my countrymen today to adopt non-violence as their final creed, only for the purpose of regulating the relations between the different races, and for purpose of attaining swaraj. Hindus and Mussalmans, Christians, Sikhs and Parsis must not settle their differences by resort to violence, and the means for the attainment of swaraj must be non-violent. This I venture to place before India, not as a weapon of the weak, but of the strong. Hindus and Mussalmans prate about no compulsion in religion. What is it but compulsion if Hindus will kill a

Mussalman for saving a cow? It is like wanting to convert a Mussalman to Hinduism by force. And similarly, what is it but compulsion if Mussalmans seek to prevent by force Hindus from playing music before mosques? Virtue lies in being absorbed in one's prayers in the presence of din and noise. We shall both be voted irreligious savages by posterity if we continue to make a futile attempt to compel one another to respect our religious wishes. Again, a nation of three hundred million people should be ashamed to have to resort to force to bring to book one hundred thousand Englishmen. To convert them or, if you will, even to drive them out of the country, we need, not force of arms, but force of will. If we have not the latter, we shall never get the former. If we develop the force of will, we shall find that we do not need the force of arms. . . .

It must be common cause between the two communities that neither party shall take the law into its own hands, but that all points in dispute, wherever and whenever they arise, shall be decided by reference either to private arbitration, or to the law courts if they wish. This is the whole meaning of non-violence, so far as communal matters are concerned. To put it another way, just as we do not break one another's heads in respect of civil matters, so may we not do even in respect of religious matters. This is the only pact that is immediately necessary between the parties, and I am sure that everything else will follow.

[CWMG 24:139–141.]

UNTOUCHABILITY AND SWARAJ

On June 12, 1924, Gandhi was asked to explain why he felt there to be a necessarily inverse relationship between the evil of Untouchability and the establishment of political independence, or swaraj, and why he was adamant that without the removal of Untouchability there would be no freedom.

I abhor with my whole soul the system which has reduced a large number of Hindus to a level less than that of beasts. The vexed problem would be solved if the poor *Panchama*, not to use the word "untouchable," was allowed to mind his own business. Unfortunately, he has no mind or business he can call his own. Has a beast any mind or business but that of his master's? Has a *Panchama* a place he can call his own? He may not walk on the very roads he cleans and pays for by the sweat of his brow. He may not even dress as the others do. The correspondent talks of toleration. It is an abuse of language to say that we Hindus extend any toleration towards our *Panchama* brothers. We have degraded them and then have the audacity to use their very degradation against their rise.

Swaraj for me means freedom for the meanest of our countrymen. If the lot of the *Panchama* is not improved when we are all suffering, it is not likely to be better under the intoxication of swaraj. If it is necessary for us to buy peace with the Mussalmans as a condition of swaraj, it is equally necessary for us to give

peace to the *Panchama* before we can, with any show of justice or self-respect, talk of swaraj. I am not interested in freeing India merely from the English yoke. I am bent upon freeing India from any yoke whatsoever. I have no desire to exchange King Log for King Stork. Hence for me the movement of swaraj is a movement of self-purification.

[CWMG 24:226–227.]

THE SIN OF UNTOUCHABILITY

Three years earlier, on January 19, 1921, Gandhi had spoken on the same theme.

It is well that the National [A]ssembly passed the resolution stating that the removal of this blot on Hinduism was necessary for the attainment of swaraj. The devil succeeds only by receiving help from his fellows. He always takes advantage of the weakest spots in our natures in order to gain mastery over us. Even so does the Government retain its control over us through our weaknesses or vices. And if we would render ourselves proof against its machinations we must remove our weaknesses. It is for that reason that I have called non-co-operation a process of purification. As soon as that process is completed, this Government must fall to pieces for want of the necessary environment, just as mosquitoes cease to haunt a place whose cesspools are filled up and dried.

Has not a just Nemesis overtaken us for the crime of untouchability? Have we not reaped as we have sown? Have we not practised Dyerism and O'Dwyerism on our own kith and kin? We have segregated the “pariah” and we are in turn segregated in the British Colonies. We deny him the use of public wells; we throw the leavings of our plates at him. His very shadow pollutes us. Indeed there is no charge that the “pariah” cannot fling in our faces and which we do not fling in the faces of Englishmen.

How is this blot on Hinduism to be removed? “Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you.” I have often told English officials that, if they are friends and servants of India, they should come down from their pedestal, cease to be patrons, demonstrate by their loving deeds that they are in every respect our friends, and believe us to be equals in the same sense they believe fellow-Englishmen to be their equals. After the experiences of the Punjab and the Khilafat, I have gone a step further and asked them to repent and to change their hearts. Even so it is necessary for us Hindus to repent of the wrong we have done, to alter our behaviour towards those whom we have “suppressed” by a system as devilish as we believe the English system of the Government of India to be. We must not throw a few miserable schools at them: we must not adopt the air of superiority towards them. We must treat them as our blood-brothers as they are in fact. We must return to them the inheritance of which we have robbed them. And this must not be the act of a few English-knowing reformers

merely, but it must be a conscious voluntary effort on the part of the masses. We may not wait till eternity for this much belated reformation. We must aim at bringing it about within this year of grace, probation, preparation and *tapasya* [discipline]. It is a reform not to follow swaraj but to precede it.

Untouchability is not a sanction of religion, it is a device of Satan. The devil has always quoted scriptures. But scriptures cannot transcend reason and truth. They are intended to purify reason and illuminate truth. I am not going to burn a spotless horse because the Vedas are reported to have advised, tolerated, or sanctioned the sacrifice. For me the Vedas are divine and unwritten. "The letter killeth." It is the spirit that giveth the light. And the spirit of the Vedas is purity, truth, innocence, chastity, humility, simplicity, forgiveness, godliness, and all that makes a man or woman noble and brave. There is neither nobility nor bravery in treating the great and uncomplaining scavengers of the nation as worse than dogs to be despised and spat upon. Would that God gave us the strength and the wisdom to become voluntary scavengers of the nation as the "suppressed" classes are forced to be. There are Augean stables enough and to spare for us to clean.

[CWMG 19:242–243.]

UNTOUCHABILITY, WOMEN, AND SWARAJ

Gandhi consistently featured the "uplift of women" in his program of social reforms. The political advantages of this emphasis became painfully obvious to the British government when women began to participate actively in civil disobedience campaigns. But the aim of women's emancipation was part of a broader effort that went beyond politics. Gandhi believed that at every level of national development, the country must draw on the energy and ability of its female population. He had begun his cause in South Africa, arguing as early as 1907 for women's education. "Indian men," he declared then, "have deliberately kept their women backward," and "if this state of affairs continues, India will remain in its present abominable condition even if she were to secure all her rights from the British Government"¹⁴. Thirty years later, after mobilizing millions of women as non-violent resisters in successive satyagrahas, Gandhi spoke before the All-India Women's Conference, declaring that swaraj and "the progress of India in all directions [are] impossible" without the advancement of women: "When woman whom we call abala [weak] becomes sabala [strong], all those who are helpless will become powerful."¹⁵ The first entry that follows, "Untouchability, Women, and Swaraj," indicates the connections in Gandhi's thought among essential social reforms and the dependence of swaraj on "inward growth." The second passage is an excerpt of a speech delivered at the Bhagini Society of Bombay, in February 1918.

The question of breaking down the feminine prejudice is most difficult. It is in reality a question of female education. And in this it is a question not merely of education of girls but it is one of the education of married women. I have there-

fore repeatedly suggested that every patriotic husband should become the wife's own teacher and prepare her for work among her less fortunate sisters. I have also drawn attention to the implications of the suggestion. One of them is for husbands to cease to treat their wives as objects of their enjoyment but to regard them as co-partners in their work of nation-building. . . .

That freedom which is associated with the term *swaraj* in the popular mind is no doubt unattainable without not only the removal of untouchability and the promotion of heart unity between the different sections but also without removing many other social evils that can be easily named. That inward growth which must never stop we have come to understand by the comprehensive term *swaraj*. And that *swaraj* cannot be had so long as walls of prejudice, passion and superstition continue to stifle the growth of that stately oak.

[CWMG 33:148–149.]

Dear Sisters and Brothers of Bhagini Samaj,

. . . The Samaj is dedicated to the noble aim of women's regeneration and, in the same way that another's *tapascharya* [self-sacrifice] does not help one to ascend to heaven, men cannot bring about the regeneration of women. I don't mean to suggest that men do not desire it, or that women would not want to have it through men's help; I merely wish to place before you the principle that it is only through self-help that an individual or race can rise. This is not a new principle, but we often forget to act upon it. . . .

I have close associations, as you know, with both men and women, but I find that I can do nothing in the way of service to women without help from women workers. That is why I take every occasion to protest in no uncertain terms that, so long as women in India remain ever so little suppressed or do not have the same rights [as men], India will not make real progress.

[CWMG 14:202–203.]

THE SALT SATYAGRAHA OF 1930: THE LETTER TO LORD IRWIN

In 1928 a local tax-resistance campaign in the western Indian district of Bardoli, Gujarat, proved successful. Gandhi found in this small-scale movement the key to his next national campaign, which in 1930 took the long-planned leap into mass civil disobedience. This historic action, easily the largest movement of civil disobedience ever undertaken, became known as the "salt satyagraha" because it was a campaign aimed at the duty, or tax, charged by the government on salt.

Gandhi's letter to Lord Irwin, the viceroy of India, dated March 2, 1930, dwells on the economic burden that the salt tax imposed on the poor, but Gandhi knew that the real force of the salt satyagraha came from its symbolic meaning. Once again he had found a way to seize the moral high ground by evoking the image of a heroic struggle

against a cruelly exploitative foreign system that, as he says in his letter to Irwin, “seems to be designed to crush the very life” out of its victims.

This letter to Irwin represents Gandhi at his best, informing his adversary in advance of his intentions and reasons, and even the details of his battle plans. Beginning in Gandhi’s classic style with “Dear friend,” it sets the tone of congeniality and trust that served to create ambivalence in the British and make them hesitate, for them a fatal concession to the campaign. It is noteworthy that Gandhi’s letter opens with a humble plea that the viceroy help him “find a way out” so that disobedience would not be necessary. But there is of course power behind this plea—the power of what he calls the “intensely active force” of non-violence. His careful explanation in the bulk of the letter of precisely why he regards “British rule to be a curse” gives eloquent justification for civil disobedience.

The salt satyagraha began on March 12, 1930. Gandhi, age sixty, commenced his march with eighty followers from his ashram near Ahmedabad, traveling on foot through his home state of Gujarat. He was bound for the village of Dandi, over two hundred miles away on the western seacoast of India. He reached his destination twenty-four days later, unhindered by the government. At 6:30 a.m. on April 6, he collected a handful of natural sea salt, its use prohibited by law because it was untaxed. Press reports and film crews from the United States, Britain, and Europe, who had realized that the Mahatma was newsworthy, crowded around to record the event. He did not disappoint them, proclaiming to all the world: “With this I am shaking the foundations of the British Empire. . . . I want world sympathy in this battle of Right against Might.”¹⁶

The response was electric: mass civil disobedience throughout India followed as millions broke the salt laws, filling prisons and paralyzing the government. The viceroy had clearly been mistaken in not arresting Gandhi at once, because the delay permitted the movement to escalate quickly. By the time Gandhi was finally arrested on May 5, the movement was unstoppable; it continued unabated until February–March 1931, when Gandhi was released and concluded talks with Irwin.

Dear friend,

Before embarking on civil disobedience and taking the risk I have dreaded to take all these years, I would fain approach you and find a way out.

My personal faith is absolutely clear. I cannot intentionally hurt anything that lives, much less fellow human beings, even though they may do the greatest wrong to me and mine. Whilst, therefore, I hold the British rule to be a curse, I do not intend harm to a single Englishman or to any legitimate interest he may have in India.

I must not be misunderstood. Though I hold the British rule in India to be a curse, I do not, therefore, consider Englishmen in general to be worse than any other people on earth. I have the privilege of claiming many Englishmen as dearest friends. Indeed much that I have learnt of the evil of British rule is due to the writings of frank and courageous Eng-

lishmen who have not hesitated to tell the unpalatable truth about that rule.

And why do I regard the British rule as a curse? It has impoverished the dumb millions by a system of progressive exploitation and by ruinously expensive military and civil administration which the country can never afford.

It has reduced us politically to serfdom. It has sapped the foundations of our culture. And, by the policy of cruel disarmament, it has degraded us spiritually. Lacking the inward strength, we have been reduced, by all but universal disarmament, to a state bordering on cowardly helplessness. . . .

It seems as clear as daylight that responsible British statesmen do not contemplate any alteration in British policy that might adversely affect Britain's commerce with India or require an impartial and close scrutiny of Britain's transactions with India. If nothing is done to end the process of exploitation India must be bled with an ever increasing speed. The Finance Member regards as a settled fact the 1/6 ratio which by a stroke of the pen drains India of a few crores. And when a serious attempt is being made through a civil form of direct action, to unsettle this fact, among many others, even you cannot help appealing to the wealthy landed classes to help you to crush that attempt in the name of an order that grinds India to atoms.

Unless those who work in the name of the nation understand and keep before all concerned the motive that lies behind the craving for independence, there is every danger of independence coming to us so changed as to be of no value to those toiling voiceless millions for whom it is sought and for whom it is worth taking. It is for that reason that I have been recently telling the public what independence should really mean.

Let me put before you some of the salient points.

The terrific pressure of land revenue, which furnishes a large part of the total, must undergo considerable modification in an independent India. Even the much vaunted permanent settlement benefits the few rich zamindars [landlords], not the ryots [poor peasants]. The ryot has remained as helpless as ever. He is a mere tenant at will. Not only, then, has the land revenue to be considerably reduced, but the whole revenue system has to be so revised as to make the ryot's good its primary concern. But the British system seems to be designed to crush the very life out of him. Even the salt he must use to live is so taxed as to make the burden fall heaviest on him, if only because of the heartless impartiality of its incidence. The tax shows itself still more burdensome on the poor man when it is remembered that salt is the one thing he must eat more than the rich man both individually and collectively. . . .

The iniquities sampled above are maintained in order to carry on a foreign administration, demonstrably the most expensive in the world.

Take your own salary. It is over Rs. 21,000 per month, besides many other indirect additions. The British Prime Minister gets £5,000 per year, i.e., over Rs. 5,400 per month at the present rate of exchange. You are getting over Rs. 700 per day against India's average income of less than annas 2 per day. The prime minister gets Rs. 180 per day against Great Britain's average income of nearly Rs. 2 per day. Thus you are getting much over five thousand times India's average income. The British Prime Minister is getting only ninety times Britain's average income. On bended knees I ask you to ponder over this phenomenon. . . .

A radical cutting down of the revenue, therefore, depends upon an equally radical reduction in the expenses of the administration. This means a transformation of the scheme of government. This transformation is impossible without independence. Hence, in my opinion, the spontaneous demonstration of 26th of January, in which hundreds of thousands of villagers instinctively participated. To them independence means deliverance from the killing weight.

Not one of the great British political parties, it seems to me, is prepared to give up the Indian spoils to which Great Britain helps herself from day to day, often, in spite of the unanimous opposition of Indian opinion.

Nevertheless, if India is to live as a nation, if the slow death by starvation of her people is to stop, some remedy must be found for immediate relief. The proposed Conference is certainly not the remedy. It is not a matter of carrying conviction by argument. The matter resolves itself into one of matching forces. Conviction or no conviction, Great Britain would defend her Indian commerce and interests by all the forces at her command. India must consequently evolve force enough to free herself from that embrace of death.

It is common cause that, however disorganized and, for the time being, insignificant it may be, the party of violence is gaining ground and making itself felt. Its end is the same as mine. But I am convinced that it cannot bring the desired relief to the dumb millions. And the conviction is growing deeper and deeper in me that nothing but unadulterated non-violence can check the organized violence of the British Government. Many think that non-violence is not an active force. My experience, limited though it undoubtedly is, shows that non-violence can be an intensely active force. It is my purpose to set in motion that force as well against the organized violent force of the British rule as [against] the unorganized violent force of the growing party of violence. To sit still would be to give rein to both the forces above mentioned. Having unquestioning and immovable faith in the efficacy of non-violence as I know it, it would be sinful on my part to wait any longer.

This non-violence will be expressed through civil disobedience, for the moment confined to the inmates of the Satyagraha Ashram, but ultimately designed to cover all those who choose to join the movement with its obvious limitations.

I know that in embarking on non-violence I shall be running what might fairly be termed a mad risk. But the victories of truth have never been won without risks, often of the gravest character. Conversion of a nation that has consciously or unconsciously preyed upon another, far more numerous, far more ancient and no less cultured than itself, is worth any amount of risk. . . .

The plan through civil disobedience will be to combat such evils as I have sampled out. If we want to sever the British connection it is because of such evils. When they are removed the path becomes easy. Then the way to friendly negotiation will be open. If the British commerce with India is purified of greed, you will have no difficulty in recognizing our independence. I respectfully invite you then to pave the way for immediate removal of those evils, and thus open a way for a real conference between equals, interested only in promoting the common good of mankind through voluntary fellowship and in arranging terms of mutual help and commerce equally suited to both. . .

This letter is not in any way intended as a threat but is a simple and sacred duty peremptory on a civil resister. Therefore I am having it specially delivered by a young English friend who believes in the Indian cause and is a full believer in non-violence and whom Providence seems to have sent to me, as it were, for the very purpose.¹⁷

I remain, Your sincere friend, M. K. Gandhi

[CWMG 43:2-3, 4, 5-8.]

FROM THE GANDHI-IRWIN PACT TO QUIT INDIA

Gandhi's negotiations with Lord Irwin led to the Gandhi-Irwin Pact and the suspension of the civil disobedience campaign set off by the Salt March. Many, but not all, political prisoners were released, and Gandhi agreed to attend the Second Round Table Conference in late 1931 in London. At his own insistence, Gandhi was the sole official Congress representative at these talks. Although his stay in London earned him considerable good will among segments of the British public and he made many personal contacts, the talks failed to produce agreement on steps of political advance for India.

Upon his return to India, Gandhi moved to resume the civil disobedience campaign, and he and hundreds of other congressmen were jailed. This period was marked by Gandhi's fast against the government's Communal Award, which granted separate electorates to the Untouchables. Gandhi's fast pressured Dr. Ambedkar to

agree to an alteration of the Communal Award called "The Poona Pact," which gave the Untouchables more reserved seats but with joint electorates (see Ambedkar-Gandhi selections).

After passage of the Government of India Act of 1935, Gandhi agreed to the participation of the Congress in the elections of 1936–37. After the first of these, the Congress formed ministries in seven provinces. Gandhi was against the Congress entering into coalitions and so prevented any Congress-Muslim League alliance in Bengal. Once the Second World War began in 1939, the Congress resigned from all ministries, since it had not been consulted on India's joining the war. Lord Linlithgow, on behalf of the British government, had brought India into the war against Germany.

Gandhi led the individual satyagraha campaign of 1940 and then inspired the August 1942 movement of non-violent resistance to the Raj, called the "Quit India Movement." In between these campaigns Gandhi met the Cripps Mission, but the Congress and Gandhi declined its terms. The 1940 individual satyagraha efforts led to a modest number of arrests. But "Quit India" was a mass protest movement which, though it started non-violently, soon resulted in many acts of violence. This violence was led in some areas by members of the Congress Socialist Party (notably Jayaprakash Narayan, Rammanohar Lohia, and Aruna Asaf Ali) who had gone underground when threatened with arrest. They aimed to attack property, not people, in an effort to weaken the Raj. But the movement also involved mass and spontaneous demonstrations by students, peasants, and workers, especially in Bihar, eastern Uttar Pradesh, Midnapore district in Bengal, and quite a few other local areas across northern and central India. It was met with fierce repression by the Raj, and at least 90,000 people were jailed and probably more than a thousand killed. The rebellion was crushed by the end of 1942, but pockets of resistance held out into 1944.

Gandhi issued many statements following the failure of the Cripps Mission, and wrote in the "Harijan" of April 26, 1942, "Whatever the consequences, therefore, to India, her real safety and of Britain's too lie in orderly and timely British withdrawal from India. All talk of treaties with the princes and obligations towards minorities are a British creation designed for the preservation of British rule and British interests. It must melt before the stern reality that faces all of us. . . . The fiction of majority and minority will vanish like the mist before the morning sun of liberty. Truth to tell, there will be neither majority nor minority in the absence of the paralyzing British arms. The millions of India would then be an undefined but one mass of humanity. I have no doubt that at that time the natural leaders will have wisdom enough to evolve an honourable solution to their difficulties."¹⁸

The Congress moved ahead with its plans for civil disobedience on a wide scale with the resolution of August 7, 1942, calling for the British to withdraw immediately from India. Gandhi spoke supportively and at length on the resolution. On August 9 he conveyed his last instructions through his secretary, Pyarelal: "Let every non-vio-

lent soldier of freedom write out the slogan 'Do or Die' on a piece of paper or cloth, and stick it on his clothes, so that in case he died in the course of offering satyagraha, he might be distinguished by that sign from other elements who do not subscribe to non-violence."¹⁹ Gandhi also suggested that each participant in the cause was "free to interpret ahimsa in your own way."²⁰ The same day Gandhi was arrested along with all of the top Congress leaders.

Gandhi was in jail during the war until he was released in 1944 to afford him the opportunity to negotiate with Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League. These discussions led nowhere, and Gandhi agreed to Congress participation in the postwar elections. Lord Wavell arranged talks after the elections, and then the Cabinet Mission visited India in 1946, offering proposals for the transfer of power into Indian hands. (There is further discussion of these moves and their consequences in the introduction to chapter 7.)

GANDHI'S RESPONSES TO INDIA'S CIVIL WAR IN HIS LAST YEAR

Although Gandhi gave primacy to his "constructive program" of social reforms to attain swaraj, history will remember him for his salt march of 1930, and then for his heroic fasts in Calcutta and Delhi to contain the communal violence of India's civil war in 1947–48.

In terms of India's escalating communal problems, even after Independence, Gandhi insisted that it was the clear and present obligation of the Hindu majority to protect India's Muslim minority. Hindus justified oppression of Muslims by arguing that in their new-found democracy, a majority had the right to prevail, and this was what popular sovereignty meant. Gandhi countered with a liberal affirmation of minority rights, and then went further by contending that majority rights should be earned through fulfillment of civic responsibility. Excerpted below are two speeches, of June 29 and December 20, 1947, given in the great public squares of New Delhi, outside the chambers where India's new federal constitution was being written, and finally one statement dictated during his last fast, in January 1948.

June 29, 1947

Brothers and Sisters,

Yesterday I talked to you about duty. However, I was not able to say all that I had intended to say. Whenever a person goes anywhere certain duties come to devolve on him. The man who neglects his duty and cares only to safeguard his rights does not know that rights that do not spring from duties done cannot be safeguarded. This applies also to the Hindu-Muslim rela-

tions. Whether it is the Hindus living in a place or Muslims or both, they will come to acquire rights if they do their duty. Then they do not have to demand rights. . . .

This is a paramount law and no one can change it. If Hindus consider Muslims their brothers and treat them well, Muslims too will return friendship for friendship. Take a village for example. If there are in it five hundred Hindus and five Muslims, then the five hundred Hindus come to have certain obligations towards the five Muslims which *ipso facto* gives the Hindus certain rights. In their arrogance they should not think that they can crush the Muslims and kill them for it cannot be anyone's right to kill. There is no bravery in killing. It is cowardice and a disgrace. The duty of the Hindus is to share with the Muslims in their joys and sorrows even if they wear beards and face towards the West during *namaaz*. They should see whether they are getting enough food and water and whether their own needs are being satisfied. When the five hundred Hindus do their duty, then they earn the right to expect that the five Muslims also would do theirs. If the village catches fire and the Muslims think that they should let it burn and do everything to see that it spreads, then they will not be doing their duty. . . .

But supposing the five Muslims are bent on mischief, supposing you give them food and water and treat them well and they still abuse you, what then will be the duty of the five hundred Hindus? It certainly is not their duty to cut them down. It would be bestial, not human, to do so. If a brother of mine has gone mad, shall I then start beating him up? I shall not do so. I shall confine him in a room and stop others from treating him roughly. This is the human way. Similarly if the Muslims in question do not want to behave in a friendly manner and keep on saying that they are a separate nation, that though they are only five, they can summon five crores of Muslims from outside, the Hindus should not let themselves be frightened by such a threat. They should tell the Muslims outside that they want to be friends with the five Muslims, but that they don't reciprocate. That if they want to help them it is their affair, but the Hindus would not be frightened or subdued by force. The world will understand that the five hundred Hindus are good people and want to do their duty. The same thing applies to a village where there are five hundred Muslims and only five Hindus. There are many such villages in Pakistan. Some people from the Jhelam area had been to see me. They were concerned about their future in their home country. I told them that if the Muslims there were good people, could exercise self-control in doing their duty, then they would have nothing to fear. But if the few Hindus there were wicked, then

even if Hindus from all over India went to help them nothing would be gained.

[CWMG 88:236–238.]

I get many letters full of abuse. The abuse has no effect on me for I take the abuse as praise. But people hurl abuses at me not because I take it as praise but because in their eyes I am not what I ought to be. There was a time when these same people used to sing my praises. I have selected two questions contained in a letter I have received today which I shall answer here. The first questions is: “You have become so used to the British army. What will happen to you after the British army withdraws from here?” . . .

We have no use for the British army. It does not increase our strength but reduces it. I am of course a votary of non-violence but this applies even to those who do not believe in non-violence. . . .

We do not want the British army or any other army either to suppress us or to defend us.

But the riots in Amritsar, Lahore and other places have made us lose faith in ourselves. We have become so wicked that we have begun to fear each other. The idea has begun to take root in our hearts that if the army is not there people will eat each other up. But the fact is that so long as there is a third party ready to suppress us we cannot hope to be strong ourselves. Swaraj is not for cowards.

The second question is: “What a silly old man you are that you cannot see how your ahimsa stinks. Your ahimsa can save neither the Hindus nor the Muslims. If we suffer you to live it is not for your ahimsa but in consideration of the services you have rendered to the country.”

What stinks in my nostrils is not my ahimsa but the blood that is flowing everywhere around me. My ahimsa smells sweet to me. A man who drinks nectar every day does not find it so sweet as when he drinks it after having swallowed a draught of poison. Ahimsa did not always smell so sweet as it does now. For then the atmosphere was permeated with ahimsa. But today when violence is giving out so much stench it is only my ahimsa which acts as an antidote. The letter also asks me why I am repeatedly meeting Mr. Jinnah. He is our enemy and we ought to keep away from him. The Baluchis similarly are our enemies and the Congress ought to have nothing to do with them. How can the Congress do so? Its mission is to serve all. I agree that Mr. Jinnah has done a disservice to the country in denouncing Hindus, especially *savarna* Hindus as his enemies. If a man acts wickedly one feels sorry but after all he is our brother. Hindus cannot go mad. Although Mr. Jinnah has got Pakistan it does not mean that we should cease to associate with him. There are many disputes which can be settled only if we meet together.

[CWMG 88:214–215.]

New Delhi, December 20, 1947

Brothers and Sisters,

It is a matter of grief that there has been rioting again in Delhi. It has been of a minor nature, but still it is regrettable. If it is our wish that Muslims should leave India, we should say so clearly or the Government may declare that it will not be safe for Muslims to continue to live in India. Or we should all tell them that rather than be killed off slowly in riots, it would be better for them to go. But if we do so I see in it the doom of Hinduism and Sikhism. Likewise it will be the doom of Islam if Pakistan decides that no Hindus and Sikhs may live there. There are not very many Muslims left in India. We have already expelled a large number. They did not go voluntarily. They were compelled to leave. I wish we could become brave and noble and courageous. It is only a coward who will say that a Muslim may not stay in India. Why can't a Muslim stay in India? If he is bad he must be reformed—not through violence but by persuasion. Why have we come to this pass that Hindus and Sikhs should live in fear in Pakistan and Muslims should live in fear in India? And yet we make the tall claims that everyone can live in our country in peace. I tell the Government that they must see that our promises are fulfilled. The army, the police and the officials have all to become good. If we behave decently we can make progress. If not, the reins of power that have come into our hands will slip away. . . .

If we want true democracy to be established in India, we must all co-operate in furthering that work. It is only the people who can make a success of any work. The people provide the foundation on which alone we can raise a structure of any height. But if we only continue our internecine strife we shall meet with the [worst] fate.

[CWMG 90:266–267.]

New Delhi, January 14, 1948

I am dictating this from my bed early on Wednesday morning. It is the second day of the fast. . . .

I do not consider this an ordinary fast. I have undertaken it after much reflection. . . .

Delhi is the capital of India. If we do not accept partition in our hearts, that is, if we do not consider Hindus and Muslims separate peoples, we shall have to admit that Delhi is no longer the capital of India as we have visualized it. Delhi has always been the capital. It is this city which was Indraprastha, which was Hastinapur. We see the ruins standing today. It is the heart of India. It would be the limit of foolishness to regard it as

belonging only to the Hindus or the Sikhs. It may sound harsh but there is no exaggeration in it. It is the literal truth. All Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and Jews who people this country from Kanyakumari to Kashmir and from Karachi to Dibrugarh in Assam and who have lovingly and in a spirit of service adopted it as their dear motherland, have an equal right to it. No one can say that it has place only for the majority and the minority should be dishonoured. Whoever serves it with the purest devotion must have the first right over it. Therefore, anyone who seeks to drive out the Muslims is Delhi's enemy number one. We are heading towards the catastrophe. Every Indian must do his bit to ward it off.

What should we do then? If we would see Panchayat Raj,²¹ i.e., democracy established, we would regard the humblest and the lowliest Indian as being equally the ruler of India and the tallest in the land. For this everyone should be pure. If they are not they should become so. He who is pure will also be wise. He will observe no distinctions between caste and caste, between touchable and untouchable, but will consider everyone equal with himself. He will bind others to himself with love. To him no one would be an untouchable. He would treat the labourers the same as he would the capitalists. He will, like the millions of toilers, earn his living from service of others and will make no distinction between intellectual and manual work. To hasten this desirable consummation, we should voluntarily turn ourselves into scavengers. He who is wise will never touch opium, liquor or any intoxicants. He will observe the vow of swadeshi and regard every woman who is not his wife as his mother, sister or daughter according to her age, and never see anyone with eyes of lust. He will concede to woman the same rights he claims for himself. If need be he will sacrifice his own life but never kill another.

[CWMG 90:419-420.]

TRUE ALTRUISM

While Gandhi emphasized India's independence, and social reforms as a prerequisite for it, his essential message was decidedly individualistic: he focused on personal transformation as an essential first step to the practice of satyagraha. In response to a letter from his nephew, he gave advice characteristic of his theory and practice of non-violence.

I hope I have replied to all your questions. Please do not carry unnecessarily on your head the burden of emancipating India. Emancipate your own self. Even that burden is very great. Apply everything to yourself. Nobility of soul consists in realizing that you are yourself India. In your emancipation is the emancipation of India. All else is make-believe. If you feel interested, do persevere. You

and I need not worry about others. If we bother about others, we shall forget our own task and lose everything. Please ponder over this from the point of view of altruism, not of selfishness.

[CWMG 10:206–207.]

Responses to Gandhi

Gandhi's idiosyncratic thought and leadership provoked an extraordinary outburst of ideas. These ranged from the appreciative analysis offered by his close associate Jawaharlal Nehru to the unflinching condemnation he received from his assassin, Nathuram Godse. The representative responses that follow include in some cases Gandhi's own direct replies.

THE HEIR APPARENT: JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889–1964) was born in Allahabad, the son of Motilal Nehru, a wealthy Brahman lawyer whose family had originally come from Kashmir, and of Swarup Rani Nehru. After private tutoring, Nehru continued his education at the Harrow School and then at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he studied science. After studying law at the Inner Temple in London, he returned to India in 1912 and practiced law for several years without enthusiasm. In 1916 he married Kamala Kaul, and in 1917 they had a daughter, Indira.

In 1919 Nehru joined the Congress and became devoted to Gandhi, now its unofficial leader. Gandhi had reorganized the Congress by this time and recruited able lieutenants throughout India; Nehru was among them.

Nehru brought his father into active cooperation with Gandhi, and father and son worked together in the nationalist cause during the 1920s. Nehru was also active in the Allahabad municipal government. Guided by Gandhi, he gradually learned about rural India and became an effective speaker to both Western-educated sophisticates and Indian peasants. In time, Nehru's popularity became second only to Gandhi's.

During this period Nehru was imprisoned many times for civil disobedience. His longest detentions occurred between 1932 and 1935, and 1942 and 1945. While in prison, he wrote his major books, *Toward Freedom* (1936), an autobiography; *The Discovery of India* (1946); and *Glimpses of World History* (1934), a series of letters to his daughter, Indira. He was a talented and expressive writer in English; both he and India's freedom struggle became more widely known through the circulation of his writings in the West.

By the end of World War II, Nehru was recognized as Gandhi's heir apparent in the Congress. When the British formed an interim Indian government in 1946 preliminary to full independence, by Gandhi's choice Nehru became its prime minister. As head of the interim government, Nehru participated in negotiations for a united and federated India that were held in 1946 among the British rulers, the Congress,

and the Muslim League. Nehru opposed the division of India on the basis of religion. His perspective was secular and democratic: he believed that all Indians, regardless of religious affiliation, should be equal citizens of the new nation. The parties were unable to agree on a structure for federation, but the British government through its last viceroy, Lord Louis Mountbatten, worked out a procedure for the transfer of power and the partition of the subcontinent. Nehru reluctantly agreed to the partition.

Nehru greatly helped in revising and implementing Mountbatten's plan, and became personally close to Mountbatten and to his wife, Edwina. At Mountbatten's urging, Nehru agreed to maintain India's membership in the British-sponsored Commonwealth of Nations, setting a precedent for other former British colonies. Nehru became independent India's first prime minister on August 15, 1947, and remained its leader until his death in 1964. He also served as India's foreign minister, and dominated the Indian political scene during those seventeen years.

“BE NOT AFRAID”

Devotion to the cause of India's freedom and compassion for the lot of their nation's poor created an indissoluble bond between Gandhi and Nehru. In their attitudes toward other questions, however, Nehru and Gandhi were poles apart. Religion held no meaning for Nehru, but for his guru it was all-important. Gandhi held non-violence and simple living to be ends in themselves, but Nehru considered them merely as practical expedients in the political struggle. Gandhi's ideal India was a decentralized family of self-sufficient villages; Nehru's ideal India was a centralized modern state with a planned industrial economy. Despite their intellectual differences, however, Nehru found in Gandhi India's most effective mass mobilizer. The following passages from Nehru's writings offer an eloquent analysis of the sources of Gandhi's charismatic leadership.

World War I came. Politics were at a low ebb, chiefly because of the split in the Congress between the two sections, the so-called Extremists and the Moderates, and because of wartime restrictions and regulations. Yet one tendency was marked: the rising middle class among the Moslems was growing more nationally minded and was pushing the Moslem League toward the Congress. They even joined hands.

Industry developed during the war and produced enormous dividends—100 to 200 per cent—from the jute mills of Bengal and the cotton mills of Bombay, Ahmedabad, and elsewhere. Some of these dividends flowed to the owners of foreign capital in Dundee and London; some went to swell the riches of Indian millionaires. And yet the workers who had created these dividends lived at an incredibly low level of existence—in “filthy, disease-ridden hovels” with no window or chimney, no light or water supply, no sanitary arrangements. This, near that so-called city of palaces, Calcutta, dominated by British capital. In Bombay, where Indian capital was more in evidence, an inquiry commission found in one room, 15 feet by 12, six families, in all thirty adults and children, living

together. Three of these women were expecting a confinement soon, and each family had a separate oven in that one room. These are special cases, but they are not very exceptional. They describe conditions in the twenties and thirties of this century when some improvements had already been made. What these conditions were like previous to these improvements staggers the imagination.

I remember visiting some of these slums and hovels of industrial workers, gasping for breath there, and coming out dazed and full of horror and anger. I remember also going down a coal mine in Jharia and seeing the conditions in which our womenfolk worked there. I can never forget that picture or the shock that came to me that human beings should labour thus. . . .

World War I ended at last and the peace, instead of bringing us relief and progress, brought us repressive legislation and martial law in the Punjab. A bitter sense of humiliation and a passionate anger filled our people. All the unending talk of constitutional reform and Indianization of the services was a mockery and an insult when the manhood of our country was being crushed and the inexorable and continuous process of exploitation was deepening our poverty and sapping our vitality. We had become a derelict nation.

Yet what could we do, how change this vicious process? We seemed to be helpless in the grip of some all-powerful monster; our limbs were paralyzed, our minds deadened. The peasantry were servile and fear-ridden; the industrial workers were no better. The middle class, the intelligentsia who might have been beacon lights in the enveloping darkness, were themselves submerged in this all-pervading gloom. In some ways their condition was even more pitiful than that of the peasantry. Large numbers of the *déclassé* intellectuals, cut off from the land and incapable of any kind of manual or technical work, joined the swelling army of the unemployed, and helpless, hopeless, sank ever deeper into the morass. A few successful lawyers or doctors or engineers or clerks made little difference to the mass. The peasant starved; yet centuries of an unequal struggle against his environment had taught him to endure, and even in poverty and starvation he had a certain calm dignity, a feeling of submission to an all-powerful fate. Not so the middle classes, more especially the new petty bourgeoisie, who had no such background. . . .

What could we do? How could we pull India out of this quagmire of poverty and defeatism which sucked her in? . . .

And then Gandhi came. He was like a powerful current of fresh air that made us stretch ourselves and take deep breaths, like a beam of light that pierced the darkness and removed the scales from our eyes, like a whirlwind that upset many things but most of all the working of people's minds. He did not descend from the top; he seemed to emerge from the millions of India, speaking their language and incessantly drawing attention to them and their appalling condition. Get off the backs of these peasants and workers, he told us, all you who live by their exploitation; get rid of the system that produces this poverty and misery.

Political freedom took new shape then and acquired a new content. Much that he said we only partially accepted or sometimes did not accept at all. But all this was secondary. The essence of his teaching was fearlessness and truth and action allied to these, always keeping the welfare of the masses in view. The greatest gift for an individual or a nation, so we had been told in our ancient books, was *abhaya*, fearlessness, not merely bodily courage but the absence of fear from the mind. Chanakya and Yagnavalka had said, at the dawn of our history, that it was the function of the leaders of a people to make them fearless. But the dominant impulse in India under British rule was that of fear, pervasive, oppressing, strangling fear; fear of the army, the police, the widespread secret service; fear of the official class; fear of laws meant to suppress, and of prison; fear of the landlord's agent; fear of the moneylender; fear of unemployment and starvation, which were always on the threshold. It was against this all-pervading fear that Gandhi's quiet and determined voice was raised: Be not afraid. . . .

So, suddenly as it were, that black pall of fear was lifted from the people's shoulders, not wholly, of course, but to an amazing degree. As fear is close companion to falsehood, so truth follows fearlessness. The Indian people did not become much more truthful than they were, nor did they change their essential nature overnight; nevertheless a sea change was visible as the need for falsehood and furtive behavior lessened. It was a psychological change, almost as some expert in the psychoanalytical method had probed deep into the patient's past, found out the origins of his complexes, exposed them to his view, and thus rid him of that burden.

There was that psychological reaction also, a feeling of shame at our long submission to an alien rule that had degraded and humiliated us, and a desire to submit no longer, whatever the consequences might be. We did not grow much more truthful, perhaps, than we had been previously, but Gandhi was always there as a symbol of uncompromising truth to pull us up and shame us into truth. . . .

Gandhi for the first time entered the Congress organization and immediately brought about a complete change in its constitution. He made it democratic and a mass organization. Democratic it had been previously also, but it had so far been limited in franchise and restricted to the upper classes. Now the peasants rolled in, and in its new garb it began to assume the look of a vast agrarian organization with a strong sprinkling of the middle classes. This agrarian character was to grow. Industrial workers also came in, but as individuals and not in their separate, organized capacity.

Action was to be the basis and objective of this organization, action based on peaceful methods. Thus far, the alternatives had been: just talking and passing resolutions, or terroristic activity. Both of these were set aside, and terrorism was especially condemned as opposed to the basic policy of the Congress. A new technique of action was evolved which, though perfectly peaceful, yet involved nonsubmission to what was considered wrong, and as a consequence, a willing acceptance of the pain and suffering involved in this. Gandhi was an odd kind

of pacifist, for he was an activist full of dynamic energy. There was no submission in him to fate or anything that he considered evil; he was full of resistance, though this was peaceful and courteous.

The call of action was twofold. There was of course the action involved in challenging and resisting foreign rules; there was also the action which led us to fight our own social evils. Apart from the fundamental objective of the Congress—the freedom of India—and the method of peaceful action, the principal planks of the Congress were national unity, which involved the solution of the minority problems, and the raising of the depressed classes and the ending of the curse of untouchability.

Realizing that the main props of British rule were fear, prestige, the co-operation, willing or unwilling, of the people, and certain classes whose vested interests were centered in British rule, Gandhi attacked these foundations. Titles were to be given up, and though the titleholders responded to this only in small measure, the popular respect for these British-given titles disappeared and they became symbols of degradation. New standards and values were set up, and the pomp and splendor of the viceregal court and the princes, which used to impress so much, suddenly appeared supremely ridiculous and vulgar and rather shameful, surrounded as they were by the poverty and misery of the people. Rich men were not so anxious to flaunt their riches; outwardly at least many of them adopted simpler ways, and in their dress became almost indistinguishable from humbler folk.

The older leaders of the Congress, nurtured in a different and more quiescent tradition, did not take easily to these new ways and were disturbed by the upsurge of the masses. Yet so powerful was the wave of feeling and sentiment that swept through the country that some of that intoxication filled them also. . . .

[Gandhi] sent us to the villages, and the countryside hummed with the activity of innumerable messages of the new gospel of action. The peasant was shaken up and he began to emerge from his quiescent shell. The effect on us was different but equally far reaching, for we saw, for the first time as it were, the villager in the intimacy of his mud hut and with the stark shadow of hunger always pursuing him. We learned our Indian economics more from these visits than from books and learned discourses. The emotional experience we had already undergone was emphasized and confirmed, and henceforward there could be no going back for us to our old life or our old standards, howsoever much our views might change subsequently. . . . In two respects the background of his thoughts had a vague but considerable influence: the fundamental test of everything was how far it benefited the masses, and the means were always important and could not be ignored even though the end in view was right, for the means governed the end and varied it. . . .

It is not surprising that this astonishingly vital man, full of self-confidence and an unusual kind of power, standing for equality and freedom for each individual, but measuring all this in terms of the poorest, fascinated the masses of India and attracted them like a magnet. He seemed to them to link up the past

with the future and to make the dismal present appear just as a steppingstone to that future of life and hope. And not the masses only, but intellectuals and others also, though their minds were often troubled and confused and the change-over for them from the habits of lifetimes was more difficult. Thus he effected a vast psychological revolution not only among those who followed his lead but also among his opponents and those many neutrals who could not make up their minds what to think and what to do.

[Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*
(New York: John Day, 1946), 358–365, 367.]

SALT, THE WORD OF POWER

The Indian National Congress, led by Gandhi and Nehru, publicly issued the Declaration of Independence, or Purna (Complete) Swaraj, on January 26, 1930. Gandhi was given the responsibility for organizing the first act of civil disobedience. On February 6 he announced that he would march in defiance of the British salt tax, beginning on March 12 (see “The Salt Satyagraha of 1930,” above). Wanting the strictest discipline to be maintained during the twenty-four-day march, he recruited marchers not from the Congress Party but from his own Sabarmati Ashrama members. Congress members like Nehru were to stand by to take charge if Gandhi was arrested.

Independence day came, January 26, 1930, and it revealed to us, as if in a flash, the earnest and enthusiastic mood of the country. There was something vastly impressive about the great gatherings everywhere, peacefully and solemnly taking the pledge of independence without any speeches or exhortation. This celebration gave the necessary impetus to Gandhiji,²² and he felt, with his sure touch on the pulse of the people, that the time was ripe for action. Events followed then in quick succession, like a drama working up to its climax.

As civil disobedience approached and electrified the atmosphere, our thoughts went back to the movement of 1921–22 and the manner of its sudden suspension after Chauri Chaura. The country was more disciplined now, and there was a clearer appreciation of the nature of the struggle. The technique was understood to some extent, but more important still from Gandhiji’s point of view, it was fully realized by everyone that he was terribly in earnest about non-violence. There could be no doubt about that now, as there probably was in the minds of some people ten years before. Despite all this, how could we possibly be certain that an outbreak of violence might not occur in some locality either spontaneously or as a result of an intrigue? And, if such an incident occurred, what would be its effect on our civil disobedience movement? Would it be suddenly wound up as before? That prospect was most disconcerting. . . .

The great question that hung in the air now was—how? How were we to begin? What form of civil disobedience should we take up that would be effective, suited to the circumstances, and popular with the masses? And then the Mahatma gave the hint.

Salt suddenly became a mysterious word, a word of power. The salt tax was to be attacked, the salt laws were to be broken. We were bewildered and could not quite fit in a national struggle with common salt. . . .

Then came Gandhiji's correspondence with the Viceroy and the beginning of the Dandi Salt March from the Ashrama at Sabarmati. As people followed the fortunes of this marching column of pilgrims from day to day, the temperature of the country went up. A meeting of the All-India Congress Committee was held at Ahmedabad to make final arrangements for the struggle that was now almost upon us. The leader in the struggle was not present, for he was already tramping with his pilgrim band to the sea, and he refused to return. The All-India Congress Committee planned what should be done in case of arrests, and large powers were given to the president to act on behalf of the Committee, in case it could not meet, to nominate members of the Working Committee in place of those arrested, and to nominate a successor for himself with the same powers. Similar powers were given by provincial and local Congress committees to their presidents. . . . We hastened back to our posts to give the finishing touches to our local arrangements, in accordance with the new directions of the All-India Congress Committee, and, as Sarojini Naidu said, to pack up our toothbrushes for the journey to prison.

On our way back, father and I went to see Gandhiji. He was at Jambusar with his pilgrim band, and we spent a few hours with him there and then saw him stride away with his party to the next stage in the journey to the salt sea. That was my last glimpse of him then as I saw him, staff in hand, marching along at the head of his followers, with firm step and a peaceful but undaunted look. It was a moving sight.

April came and Gandhiji drew near to the sea, and we waited for the word to begin civil disobedience by an attack on the salt laws. For months past we had been drilling our volunteers, and Kamala and Krishna (my wife and sister) had both joined them and donned male attire for the purpose. The volunteers had, of course, no arms or even sticks. The object of training them was to make them more efficient in their work and capable of dealing with large crowds. The 6th of April was the first day of the National Week, which is celebrated annually in memory of the happenings in 1919, from Satyagraha Day to Jallianwala Bagh. On that day Gandhiji began the breach of the salt laws at Dandi beach, and three or four days later permission was given to all Congress organizations to do likewise and begin civil disobedience in their own areas.

It seemed as though a spring had been suddenly released; all over the country, in town and village, salt manufacture was the topic of the day, and many curious expedients were adopted to produce salt. We knew precious little about it, and so we read it up where we could and issued leaflets giving directions; we collected pots and pans and ultimately succeeded in producing some unwholesome stuff, which we waved about in triumph and often auctioned for fancy prices. It was really immaterial whether the stuff was good or bad; the main

thing was to commit a breach of the obnoxious salt law, and we were successful in that, even though the quality of our salt was poor. As we saw the abounding enthusiasm of the people and the way salt-making was spreading like a prairie fire, we felt a little abashed and ashamed for having questioned the efficacy of this method when it was first proposed by Gandhiji. And we marveled at the amazing knack of the man to impress the multitude and make it act in an organized way.

I was arrested on the 14th of April as I was entraining for Raipur in the Central Provinces, where I was going to attend a conference. That very day I was tried in prison and sentenced to six months' imprisonment under the Salt Act. In anticipation of arrest I had nominated (under the new powers given to me by the All-India Congress Committee) Gandhiji to act as Congress president in my absence, but, fearing his refusal, my second nomination was for father. As I expected, Gandhiji would not agree, and so father became the acting president of the Congress. He was in poor health; nevertheless he threw himself into the campaign with great energy; and, during those early months, his strong guidance and enforcement of discipline was of tremendous benefit to the movement. The movement benefited greatly, but it was at the cost of such health and physical fitness as had remained in him.

Those were days of stirring news—processions and *lathee* [stick] charges and firing, frequent *hartals* [mass strikes] to celebrate noted arrests, and special observances, like Peshawar Day, Garhwali Day, etc. For the time being the boycott of foreign cloth and all British goods was almost complete. When I heard that my aged mother and, of course, my sisters used to stand under the hot summer sun picketing before foreign cloth shops, I was greatly moved. Kamala did so also, but she did something more. She threw herself into the movement in Allahabad city and district with an energy and determination which amazed me, who thought I had known her so well for so many years. . . .

Many strange things happened in those days, but undoubtedly the most striking was the part of women in the national struggle. They came out in large numbers from the seclusion of their homes and, though unused to public activity, threw themselves into the heart of the struggle. The picketing of foreign cloth and liquor shops they made their preserve. Enormous processions consisting of women alone were taken out in all the cities; and, generally, the attitude of the women was more unyielding than that of the men. Often they became Congress “dictators” in provinces and in local areas.

The breach of the Salt Act soon became just one activity and civil resistance spread to other fields. This was facilitated by the promulgation of various ordinances by the Viceroy prohibiting a number of activities. As these ordinances and prohibitions grew, the opportunities for breaking them also grew, and civil resistance took the form of doing the very thing that the ordinance was intended to stop. The initiative definitely remained with the Congress and the people; and, as each ordinance law failed to control the situation from the point of view of government, fresh ordinances were issued by the Viceroy.

Many of the Congress Working Committee members had been arrested, but it continued to function with new members added on to it, and each official ordinance was countered by a resolution of the Working Committee giving directions as to how to meet it.

[Jawaharlal Nehru, *Toward Freedom: The Autobiography of Jawaharlal Nehru* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), 156–157, 159–162.]

SAROJINI NAIDU: COLLEAGUE AND DEVOTEE

Gandhi drew to him a remarkable assemblage of uniquely distinguished women, each of whom played a vital role in the Indian nationalist movement. They were as varied as Madeleine Slade (Mirabehn) and Muriel Lester, who joined him from Britain in the late 1920s; dedicated Indian workers such as Sushila Nayyar and Gangabehn; and, of course, his spouse, Kasturbai. Perhaps the most internationally distinguished of all was Sarojini Naidu (1879–1949), who was introduced in chapter 4 above. Her association with Gandhi began in 1914, and lasted a lifetime. She shared with him a passion for Hindu–Muslim unity and joined him in his acts of satyagraha.

THE FIRST MEETING

Naidu's attraction to Gandhi as a mentor and friend was kindled as soon as Gandhi had left South Africa—before, even, he had returned to India.

My first meeting with Mahatma Gandhi took place in London on the eve of the great European War of 1914 when he arrived fresh from his triumphs in South Africa. . . . I went wandering round in search of his lodging in an obscure part of Kensington and climbed the steep stairs of an old, unfashionable house, to find an open door framing a living picture of a little man with a shaven head, seated on the floor on a black prison blanket and eating a mess made of squashed tomatoes and olive oil out of [a] wooden prison bowl. Around him were ranged some battered tins of parched groundnuts and tasteless biscuits of dried plant in flour. I burst instinctively into happy laughter at this amusing and unexpected vision of a famous leader, whose name had already become a household word in our country. He lifted his eyes and laughed back at me, saying: "Ah, you must be Mrs. Naidu! Who else dare be so irreverent? Come in," said he, "and share my meal." "No thanks," I replied, "what an abominable mess it is!" In this way and at that instant commenced our friendship, which flowered into real comradeship and bore fruit in a long, loving, loyal discipleship, which never wavered for a single hour through more than thirty years of common service in the cause of India's freedom.

[Vernier Grover and Ranjana Arora, eds., *Great Women of Modern India*, vol. 3: *Sarojini Naidu* (New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, 1993), 182.]

THE ROWLATT BILLS CONTROVERSY

Naidu delivered the following speech at a Satyagraha Meeting at Ahmedabad on March 25, 1919, prior to the implementation of Gandhi's first satyagraha campaign, which was designed to inspire a national day of fasting.

I am ill and yet why am I standing before you? Why have our hearts been stirred to the inmost depths? Why don't we get refreshing sleep? It is because we are face to face with a hideous nightmare and the trouble is that unless it is laid at rest you and I are done for in perpetuity. What has become of the Congress-League Scheme? Where are the vaunted Montagu-Chelmsford Reform Proposals? They have receded into the background to make room for the Rowlatt Bills, better known as the Black Bills. We looked forward to receiving responsible positions at the conclusion of the war, now that besides giving unmistakable proofs of Hindu-Moslem *entente* we proved our fitness for self-government by acquitting ourselves so worthily in the war. The visit of Mr. Montagu to India, his sentimental journey through the length and breadth of the land in the company of Lord Chelmsford, and their expressions of sympathy bore no fruit, for in one hand they held the sword and a cup of poison in the other. . . .

REMEDY FOR POISON

There is one remedy for poison or physical force, and it is known as Satyagraha. Some one told me "Why are you following Mahatma Gandhi in a nerveless campaign?" He forgets that people had lost faith in the efficacy of constitutional agitation. If the Black Bills had any substratum of Justice in them why did the non-official members vote against them? The only misfortune is that the hearts of officials do not beat true to the united voice of the people. Now that the Rowlatt Bills are passed into law there are two ways of bringing about their abolition, ready at hand; rebellion or penance. It is not our nature to precipitate a struggle like the European war. We take our stand on righteousness that exalteth a nation. We do not believe that machine guns will add a cubit to our greatness. We will not set fire to cornfields, magnificent bungalows or children. Let Europe hug these delusions. India will never swerve from the path of rectitude. We must perceive truth and follow it as a religious duty. To speak truth is good, but to live truth is better. Let truth guide us in all our doings—even in our dealings with our enemies. We have to make use of this weapon in our dealings with one who holds a sword in one hand and a cup of poison in the other. We have to hold fast to Dharma. The German missed the path of rectitude and cast internal law governing warfare to the winds—we know now, with what results. India took up arms against Germany to vindicate her loyalty to truth and to the British Raj, in the well-founded conviction that she would have her reward. We are sorely disappointed to find that instead of loyalty begetting loyalty, the official

classes have seen fit to mistrust our intentions. Never mind. We are not going to submit to the Black Bills which deprive us of everything we hold dear in life, sever the family-bond in twain, and dash all delight out of existence. We will never submit to what makes helots of us all. The Satyagrahi contingents will spring to Satyagraha battle in order to protect our prestige against gratuitous invasion. Now that the Black Bills have become the law of the land we never can tell when the sword will fall over our devoted heads. It is better to swell the ranks of Satyagrahis and to know no fear than meekly to submit [to] the Black Bills and to rush into danger. Mahatma Gandhi who slights the blandishments of wealth or honours, who is indifferent to the smiles of the Viceroy or to the fear of death is constrained to employ this weapon for these very reasons. Join those who dare. Those who cannot need not hide their diminished heads in shame, since their spontaneous sympathy with the movement will be no small satisfaction to us. . . .

The fast suggested by Mahatma Gandhi is twice blessed. It will enable you to realise the privations to which many men and beasts are at present condemned and will thus be an impetus to religious sentiment. It will likewise teach you self-denial born of voluntary penance. Opportunity for vindicating our national greatness by means of Satyagraha should not be missed.

THE VERDICT OF HAFIZ

Sings [the great Persian poet] Hafiz in one of his inimitable poems: "The sea is swayed by a terrific storm. Our barge is tossed to and fro by the swelling waves. But alas! What conception can they on the shore have of our agonies?" True it is that the wearer only knows where the shoe pinches. Those of us who have been aroused from dogmatic slumber by unique love of truth will cheerfully undergo incarceration, if necessary, and will return thanks to the Lord even in a jail, praying to him to awaken the somnolent masses to a realisation of truth. Nor is Satyagraha meant for the Hindus alone. Let me remind my Moslem brothers of the significant story of Imam Hussain, who was kept without water for three days for refusal to bow his head down. When estimable friends asked him to yield, Imam Hussain said, "I hold life cheap when truth is at stake. Never shall I submit to coercion." From the depths of my soul I believe that the birth of the Messiah spoken of in the Bhagwad Gita is discernible in the stout heart of Mahatma Gandhi.

[Grover and Arora, *Great Women of Modern India: Sarojini Naidu*, 103–105.]

GANDHI — MY MASTER

Naidu was present at the court when Mahatma Gandhi was tried and sentenced to six years' imprisonment, in 1922. Describing the scene of the great trial, she wrote this passage below.

A convict and a criminal in the eyes of the Law! Nevertheless the entire Court rose in an act of spontaneous homage when Mahatma Gandhi entered—a frail, serene, indomitable figure in a coarse and scanty loin cloth, accompanied by his devoted disciple and fellow-prisoner, Shankerlal Banker.

“So you are seated near me to give me your support in case I break down,” he jested, with that happy laugh of his which seems to hold all the undimmed radiance of the world’s childhood in its depths. And looking round at the hosts of familiar faces of men and women who had travelled far to offer him a token of their love, he added, “This is like a family gathering and not a law-court.”

A thrill of mingled fear, pride, hope and anguish ran through the crowded hall when the Judge took his seat—an admirable Judge deserving of our praise alike for his brave and resolute sense of duty, his flawless courtesy, his just perception of a unique occasion and his fine tribute to a unique personality.

The strange trial proceeded and as I listened to the immortal words that flowed with prophetic fervour from the lips of my beloved master, my thoughts sped across the centuries to a different land and different age when a similar drama was enacted and another divine and gentle teacher was crucified, for spreading a kindred gospel with a kindred courage. I realised now that the lowly Jesus of Nazareth cradled in a manger furnished the only true parallel in history to this sweet invincible apostle of Indian liberty who loved humanity with surpassing compassion and to use his own beautiful phrase, “approached the poor with the mind of the poor.”

The most epic event of modern times ended quickly.

The pent-up emotion of the people burst in a storm of sorrow as a long slow procession moved towards him in a mournful pilgrimage of farewell, clinging to the hands that had toiled so incessantly, bowing over the feet that had journeyed so continuously, in the service of his country.

In the midst of all this poignant scene of many-voiced and myriad-hearted grief he stood, untroubled, in all his transcendent simplicity, the embodied symbol of the Indian Nation—its living sacrifice and sacrament in one.

They might take him to the utmost ends of the earth, but his destination remains unchanged in the hearts of his people who are both the heirs and the stewards of his matchless dreams and his matchless deeds.

[Grover and Arora, *Great Women of Modern India: Sarojini Naidu*, 12–13.]

THE CHALLENGE OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Not all Indians were as appreciative of Gandhi’s power as Nehru and Naidu, as the following examples show. As noted in chapter 5, Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913, and remained throughout his life a formidable presence on the Indian scene. In 1921 Gandhi took account of Tagore’s criticisms, and replied—as we read below—with all the deference due to India’s poet laureate: “I regard the Poet as a

sentinel warning us against the approach of enemies called bigotry, lethargy, intolerance, ignorance, inertia and other members of that brood."

Tagore, however, would not be mollified. "The Poet" chose to challenge the dominant political belief of his age and of modern Indian politics, the gospel of nationalism. Gandhi had extolled the ideal of universal harmony, but he had not singled out Indian nationalism as a threat to that ideal. His criticism was directed at the Western nation-state system. Tagore asserted that in principle there was no distinction: nationalism is in all cases a great menace.

Tagore was most distressed not by the prevalence of nationalism in the West, but by its infection of India. The idea was a Western importation, but Tagore realized that his own countrymen had developed it into a peculiar Indian type. The greatest disservice nationalism had rendered India, Tagore argued, was to have directed the country's attention away from its primary needs, which were social, not political. Nationalism could not prompt a social and moral reform of the nature that was needed; rather, it would only whet the popular appetite for increased political warfare. The real task before India was that of building a good society.

NON-COOPERATION AS POLITICAL ASCETICISM

As Gandhi's power grew, so did Tagore's suspicion of it. On March 5, 1921, he wrote from England to Charles Andrews, a Christian missionary who became a close associate of both Gandhi and Tagore.

Dear friend, lately I have been receiving more and more news and newspaper cuttings from India giving rise in my mind to a painful struggle that presages a period of suffering which is waiting for me. I am striving with all my power to tune my mood of mind to be in accord with the great feeling of excitement sweeping across my country. But deep in my being why is there this spirit of resistance maintaining its place in spite of my strong desire to remove it? . . .

The idea of non-cooperation is political asceticism. Our students are bringing their offering of sacrifices to what? Not to a fuller education but to non-education. It has at its back a fierce joy of annihilation which in its best form is asceticism and in its worst form is that orgy of frightfulness in which human nature, losing faith in the basic reality of normal life, finds a disinterested delight in unmeaning devastation, as has been shown in the late war and on other occasions which came nearer home to us. No in its passive moral form is asceticism and in its active moral form is violence. The desert is as much a form of *himsa* as is the raging sea in storm, they both are against life.

I remember the day during the Swadeshi movement in Bengal, when a crowd of young students came to see me in the first floor of our Vichitra

house. They said to me that if I ordered them to leave their schools and colleges they would instantly obey me. I was emphatic in my refusal to do so, and they went away angry, doubting the sincerity of my love for my motherland. Long before this ebullition of excitement, I myself had given a thousand rupees, when I had not five rupees to call my own, to open a *swadeshi* store and courted banter and bankruptcy. The reason for my refusing to advise those students to leave their schools was because the anarchy of a mere emptiness never tempts me, even when it is resorted to as a temporary shelter. I am frightened of an abstraction which is ready to ignore living reality. These students were no mere phantoms to me; their life was a great fact to them and to the All. I could not lightly take upon myself the tremendous responsibility of a mere negative programme for them which would uproot them from their soil, however thin and poor that soil might be. The great injury and injustice which had been done to those boys who were tempted away from their career before any *real* provision was made, could never be made good to them. Of course that is nothing from the point of view of an abstraction which can ignore the infinite value even of the smallest fraction of reality. But the throb of life in the heart of the most insignificant of men beats in the unison of love with the heart-throb of the infinite. I wish I were the little creature Jack whose one mission was to kill the giant abstraction which is claiming the sacrifice of individuals all over the world under highly painted masks of delusion.

I say again and again that I am a poet, that I am not a fighter by nature. I would give everything to be one with my surroundings. I love my fellow beings and I prize their love. Yet I have been chosen by destiny to ply my boat there where the current is against me. What irony of fate is this, that I should be preaching cooperation of cultures between East and West on this side of the sea just at the moment when the doctrine of non-cooperation is preached on the other side? You know that I do not believe in the material civilization of the West, just as I do not believe the physical body to be the highest truth in man. But I still less believe in the destruction of the physical body. What is needed is the establishment of harmony between the physical and the spiritual nature of man, maintaining the balance between the foundation and the superstructure. I believe in the true meeting of the East and the West. Love is the ultimate truth of the soul; we should do all we can not to outrage that truth, to carry its banner against all opposition. The idea of non-cooperation unnecessarily hurts that truth. It is not our hearth fire, but the fire that burns out our hearth. . . .

With love, Ever yours, Rabindranath Tagore

[Krishna Dutta and Andrew Robinson, eds., *Rabindranath Tagore: An Anthology* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 168, 170–173.]

*“THE CALL OF TRUTH”:
TAGORE’S CRITIQUE OF GANDHI*

On August 29, 1921, with Gandhi’s power at its height, Tagore delivered at a Calcutta public meeting an address entitled “The Call of Truth.” A remarkable commentary, it offered both a trenchant criticism of Gandhi’s leadership—including his insistence on universal Congressite use of the spinning wheel (charkha), as a means of dignifying the labor of the poor, and on the burning of foreign-made cloth—and an eloquent defense of individual freedom.

To make the country our own by means of our creative power is indeed a great call. It cannot be a mere summons to some mechanical exercise. For, man does not limit himself in the manner of the bee building endless replicas of cells, or the spider weaving webs of one pattern. His greatest strength is within him, and it is up to him to draw on that strength and not on blind habit. To tell him, “Do not think but act,” is to help prolong the age-old delusion that has held this country in its deadly grip. . . .

Then, at the crucial moment, Mahatma Gandhi came and stood at the door of India’s destitute millions, clad as one of themselves, speaking to them in their own language. It was a real happening, not a tale of the printed page. That is why he has been so aptly named Mahatma, Great Soul. Who else has so unreservedly accepted the vast masses of the Indian people as his own flesh and blood? At the touch of truth the pent-up forces of the spirit are set free. As soon as love stood at India’s door, it flew open. All inward niggardliness was gone. Truth awakened truth.

Stratagem in politics is a barren policy—that was a lesson of which we were sorely in need. All honour to the Mahatma, who wakened us to the power of truth. But the cowardly and the weak take easily to cheap tactics. Even today our worldly-wise ones have not been rid of the idea of using the Mahatma as a disguised and ingenious move in their political gamble. Minds corrupted by untruth cannot grasp the meaning of the great love kindled in the people’s heart by the Mahatma’s love.

This, indeed, is the birth of freedom, nothing less. It is the country’s discovery of itself. It has little to do with the alien occupation of India. This love is pure affirmation. It does not involve itself in arguments with the negative attitude. . . .

So, in the excited expectation of breathing the air of a new-found freedom, I hurried back to my homeland. But what I have seen and felt troubles me. Something seems to be weighing on the people’s spirit; a stern pressure is at work; it makes everyone talk in the same voice and make the same gestures.

When I wanted to ask questions and decide for myself, my well-wishers clapped anxious hands to my mouth: “Pray be silent.” There is a tyranny in the air—even if intangible, it is worse than open violence. Let anyone who doubts

the wisdom of the proclaimed policy speak his mind in a bare whisper, and he will have to face disciplinary action. One of our newspapers dared give a mere hint of disapproval of the burning of foreign cloth, and the readers' agitated protest came menacingly; the flames which had consumed the bales of mill cloth could quickly reduce this paper to ashes!

I see a section of the people fanatically engaged in their assigned task, and another section struck with alarm and dumbfounded. The idea prevails that all questioning must stop; there should be nothing but blind obedience. Obedience to whom? To some charmed words of incantation, to some reasonless creed! . . .

To make matters worse, the gain which is envisaged has a name but it is not defined. Even as a fear which is vague is all the more terrifying, the haziness of a lure makes it all the more tempting. Left to the imagination, everyone can give it a form according to his preference. An attempt to inquire into the real nature is of no avail, for it can easily camouflage itself. Thus, while the temptation has been magnified by its indefiniteness, the means of attainment and the hour have been precisely indicated. Many people are convinced that self-government will be won on a certain date of a certain month close ahead. Having given up their freedom of mind, they deprive others of that freedom. It is as if we have been seeking an exorcist to drive out a ghost, and then the ghost itself turns up in the guise of the exorcist.

The Mahatma has captured the heart of India with his love; we all bow down to him on that account. He has revealed to us the full power of truth and for that we are beholden. We read about eternal truth in books, we talk about them, but it is a propitious moment when we encounter truth face to face. Such an opportunity is rare in one's life. It is easy enough to go from province to province making political speeches, and even to make and break National Congresses. But the golden wand of true love that has wakened us out of age-long slumber is not to be easily found. To the possessor of that rare wand, our profound salutation.

But then, what is the good of it all if, even after we have seen the face of truth, our faith in it is not firm enough? Our minds must accept the truth of the intellect just as the heart accepts the truth of love. Till now, neither the Congress nor any other institution made a strong impression on the heart of India—it needed the touch of love. Now that we have the truth of love, are we to withdraw our trust in the other truth—just where *swaraj* is concerned? . . .

Let our faith in the Mahatma's capacity for love never diminish; but *swaraj* is not a matter of a stick and a single string. It is a vast enterprise involving complex processes and needing as much study and clear thinking as impulse and emotion. Economists and educationists and mechanical engineers must contribute their ideas and exertions to the pool of this many sided endeavour. The intellect of the people must be fully awake, so that the spirit of inquiry is untrammelled; minds must not be overawed or made inactive by compulsions, open or secret. . . .

The true vision of that ancient age lives on; its voice flings echoes. Then, why should not our supreme leader of today . . . say, "Let all who hear me come from every direction?" Freedom lies in the complete arousal of the people. God has given the Mahatma the voice that can call. Why should this not be our supreme moment?

His call has come, but only to a restricted field. To one and all he has simply said, "Spin and weave, spin and weave." Is this the strident call of the new age for a vast striving? When nature summoned the bee to a narrow hive-life, millions of bees responded and made themselves sexless for the sake of efficiency. But this sacrifice by way of self-atrophy led to the opposite of freedom. People who do not hesitate to neutralize their power in answer to some command carry within them their prison-cell. The call to the easy way is for the bee, not for man. Man reveals himself in all his strength only when his utmost capacity is demanded. . . .

I hear the voice of protest: "We do not propose to curb the mind for ever, but only for a short while." Why, even for a short while? Is it because that brief period will be enough for us to gain swaraj? That does not make sense. Swaraj is not a matter of mere self-sufficiency in the production of cloth. Its real place is within us—the mind with its diverse power goes on building swaraj for itself. Nowhere in the world has this work been completed; in some part of the body-politic a lingering greed or delusion keeps up the bondage. And that bondage is always within the mind itself. . . .

There is the bonfire of heaped mill cloth, before the very eyes of the Mother deep in shame because of her nakedness. I see no urgency for such waste except in the power of a superstition. The question of using or boycotting British-made cloth is one for economists to decide. In discussing it, the language of economists must be employed. If people cannot think scientifically, our very first battle should be against that sad state of mind. Such incapacity is the original sin out of which all other ills flow. That original sin finds support when it is proclaimed that foreign cloth is "impure" and deserves to be destroyed. Economics is tossed aside for the falsehood passing as a moral dictum. . . .

We have been ordered to burn foreign cloth. I, for one, am unable to obey. First, because I believe it to be my duty to fight the habit of blind obedience. Secondly, I feel that the cloth to be burnt is not mine, it belongs to people who are sorely in need of it. We who seem to be doing an act of sacrifice through this incendiarism have other sources of supply; but those who are really hit cannot stir out of doors because of their nakedness. Forced atonement will not wash off our sins; nor will the gain of some apparent benefits make up for the loss of the reasoned will.

The Mahatma has declared war against the tyranny of the machine which is oppressing the world. Here we are all under his banner. But we cannot accept as our ally in the fight the slave mentality that is at the root of all the misery and indignity in our national life. That, indeed, is our real enemy and through its defeat alone can swaraj within and without come to us. . . .

Henceforth, any nation which seeks isolation for itself must come into conflict with the time-spirit and find no peace. From now onward the plane of thinking of every nation will have to be international. It is the striving of the new age to develop in the mind this faculty of universality.

[Rabindranath Tagore, *Towards Universal Man* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1961), 260–271.]

“THE GREAT SENTINEL”: GANDHI’S RESPONSE TO TAGORE

The Gandhi–Tagore controversy thus focused on two aspects of the meaning of swaraj, or freedom, in its fullest sense. Tagore argued, first, that on a domestic level, Indians had placed themselves in bondage through their unthinking acceptance of dogma. They idolized a leader who, however saintly, had harnessed their blind allegiance to a gospel of retardation rather than growth. A second and related problem in Gandhi’s teaching involved its implications on an international level. Gandhi’s ideas, Tagore argued, had fostered, for the most part, an unhealthy sense of separateness that foolishly spurned the knowledge and advances of the Western world. Each of these attitudes inhibited India’s growth, and thus restricted her freedom.

To the first of Tagore’s charges, Gandhi responded that he did not wish to produce a “deathlike sameness in the nation,” but rather to use the spinning wheel to “realize the essential and living oneness of interest among India’s myriads.” Spinning was not intended to replace all other forms of activity, but rather to symbolize “sacrifice for the whole nation.”

The Bard of Shantiniketan has contributed to *The Modern Review* a brilliant essay on the present movement. It is a series of word pictures which he alone can paint. It is an eloquent protest against authority, slave-mentality or whatever description one gives of blind acceptance of a passing mania whether out of fear or hope. It is a welcome and wholesome reminder to all workers that we must not be impatient, we must not impose authority no matter how great. The Poet tells us summarily to reject anything and everything that does not appeal to our reason or heart. If we would gain swaraj, we must stand for truth as we know it at any cost. A reformer who is enraged because his message is not accepted must retire to the forest to learn how to watch, wait and pray. With all this one must heartily agree, and the Poet deserves the thanks of his countrymen for standing up for truth and reason. There is no doubt that our last state will be worse than our first, if we surrender our reason into somebody’s keeping. And I would feel extremely sorry to discover, that the country had unthinkingly and blindly followed all I had said or done. I am quite conscious of the fact that blind surrender to love is often more mischievous than a forced surrender to the lash of the tyrant. There is hope for the slave of the brute, none for that of love. Love is

needed to strengthen the weak, love becomes tyrannical when it exacts obedience from an unbeliever. To mutter a *mantra* without knowing its value is unmanly. It is good, therefore, that the Poet has invited all who are slavishly *mimicking* the call of the charkha [spinning wheel] boldly to declare their revolt. His essay serves as a warning to us all who in our impatience are betrayed into intolerance or even violence against those who differ from us. I regard the Poet as a sentinel warning us against the approach of enemies called bigotry, lethargy, intolerance, ignorance, inertia and other members of that brood.

But whilst I agree with all that the Poet has said as to the necessity of watchfulness lest we cease to think, I must not be understood to endorse the proposition that there is any such blind obedience on a large scale in the country today. I have again and again appealed to reason, and let me assure him, that if happily the country has come to believe in the spinning-wheel as the giver of plenty, it has done so after laborious thinking, after great hesitation. I am not sure, that even now educated India has assimilated the truth underlying the charkha. He must not mistake the surface dirt for the substance underneath. Let him go deeper and see for himself whether the charkha has been accepted from blind faith or from reasoned necessity.

I do indeed ask the Poet and the page to spin the wheel as a sacrament. When there is war, the poet lays down the lyre, the lawyer his law reports, the schoolboy his books. The Poet will sing the true note after the war is over, the lawyer will have occasion to go to his law books when people have time to fight among themselves. When a house is on fire, all the inmates go out, and each one takes up a bucket to quench the fire. When all about me are dying for want of food, the only occupation permissible to me is to feed the hungry. It is my conviction that India is a house on fire, because its manhood is being daily scorched, it is dying of hunger because it has no work to buy food with. Khulna is starving not because the people cannot work, but because they have no work. The Ceded Districts are passing successively through a fourth famine, Orissa is a land suffering from chronic famines. Our cities are not India. India lives in her seven and a half lakhs of villages, and the cities live upon the villages. They do not bring their wealth from other countries. The city people are brokers and commission agents for the big houses of Europe, America and Japan. The cities have co-operated with the latter in the bleeding process that has gone on for the past two hundred years. It is my belief based on experience, that India is daily growing poorer. The circulation about her feet and legs has almost stopped. And if we do not take care, she will collapse altogether.

To a people famishing and idle, the only acceptable form in which God can dare appear is work and promise of food as wages. God created man to work for his food, and said that those who ate without work were thieves. Eighty per cent of India are compulsorily thieves half the year. Is it any wonder if India has become one vast prison? Hunger is the argument that is driving India to the spinning-wheel. The call of the spinning-wheel is the noblest of all. Because it is the

call of love. And love is swaraj. The spinning-wheel will “curb the mind” when the time spent on necessary physical labour can be said to do so. We must think of millions who are today less than animals, who are almost in a dying state. The spinning-wheel is the reviving draught for the millions of our dying countrymen and countrywomen. “Why should I, who have no need to work for food, spin?” may be the question asked. Because I am eating what does not belong to me. I am living on the spoliation of my countrymen. Trace the course of every pice that finds its way into your pocket, and you will realize the truth of what I write. Swaraj has no meaning for the millions if they do not know how to employ their enforced idleness. The attainment of this swaraj is possible within a short time, and it is so possible only by the revival of the spinning-wheel. . . . A plea for the spinning-wheel is a plea for recognizing the dignity of labour. . . .

It was our love of foreign cloth that ousted the wheel from its position of dignity. Therefore I consider it a sin to wear foreign cloth. I must confess that I do not draw a sharp or any distinction between economics and ethics. Economics that hurt the moral well-being of an individual or a nation are immoral and therefore sinful. Thus the economics that permit one country to prey upon another are immoral. It is sinful to buy and use articles made by sweated labour. It is sinful to eat American wheat and let my neighbour the grain-dealer starve for want of custom. Similarly it is sinful for me to wear the latest finery of Regent Street, when I know that if I had but worn the things woven by the neighbouring spinners and weavers, that would have clothed me, and fed and clothed them. On the knowledge of my sin bursting upon me, I must consign the foreign garments to the flames and thus purify myself, and thenceforth rest content with the rough khadi made by my neighbours. On knowing that my neighbours may not, having given up the occupation, take kindly to the spinning-wheel, I must take it up myself and thus make it popular.

I venture to suggest to the Poet, that the clothes I ask him to burn must be and are his. If they had to his knowledge belonged to the poor or the ill-clad, he would long ago have restored to the poor what was theirs. In burning *my* foreign clothes I burn my shame. I must refuse to insult the naked by giving them clothes they do not need, instead of giving them work which they sorely need. I will not commit the sin of becoming their patron, but on learning that I had assisted in impoverishing them, I would give them a privileged position and give them neither crumbs nor cast-off clothing, but the best of my food and clothes and associate myself with them in work. . . .

True to his poetical instinct the Poet lives for the morrow and would have us do likewise. He presents to our admiring gaze the beautiful picture of the birds early in the morning singing hymns of praise as they soar into the sky. These birds had their day's food and soared with rested wings in whose veins new blood had flown during the previous night. But I have had the pain of watching birds who for want of strength could not be coaxed even into a flutter of their wings. The human bird under the Indian sky gets up weaker than when he

pretended to retire. For millions it is an eternal vigil or an eternal trance. It is an indescribably painful state which has to be experienced to be realized. I have found it impossible to soothe suffering patients with a song from Kabir. The hungry millions ask for one poem—invigorating food. They cannot be given it. They must earn it. And they can earn only by the sweat of their brow. . . .

In these verses is contained for me the whole truth of the spinning-wheel as an indispensable sacrament for the India of today. If we will take care of today, God will take care of the morrow.

[CWMG 21:287–291.]

COMMUNIST RESPONSES TO GANDHI

Karl Marx and his partner, Friedrich Engels, did not write an organized analysis of Indian political economy or give a coherent account of what they referred to the Asiatic mode of production, but Marx wrote two series of articles on India, the first at the time of the renewal of the India Act in 1853, and the second at the time of the Rebellion in 1857. Marx accepted the idea of the “Oriental despotic state”²⁰ and described what he understood to be small, self-contained village communities in the Indian past that had depended on agriculture and “manufactures,” i.e., the production of textiles. However, he insisted, since such communities involved caste and slavery, they represented no golden age.

The coming of the British, he believed, marked a great shift, a revolutionary change for India. The old system of small communities and a flourishing textile industry were destroyed. Out of that destruction the British bourgeoisie were in the process of creating a monster: an Indian economy and society that they would not be able to control. This would be the case, Marx said, because the Indians were intelligent and hard-working; they would learn all the British had to teach, and then move on beyond them. Crucial in this new age was the system of railways, which the British were building for their own purposes but which would also be used by Indians.

Although neither M. N. Roy nor R. Palme Dutt refers directly to Marx’s writings on India, both were affiliated with the Third Communist International, which was the successor to the First International founded by Marx in the nineteenth century, and both made use of Marxist concepts. Indeed, the impact of Marxism—as we see throughout this volume, not only here but also in the selections by the Naxalites and the subaltern historians in chapter 8—is an important ingredient in the modern history of India.

Manabendra Nath Roy was born in 1887 into a Bengali Brahman family in a village outside of Calcutta. Twenty-eight years later, as a terrorist revolutionary, he left India for an adventurous career in the communist international movement.

The year 1915 is a key one in the Gandhi–Roy story. In that year, Roy, as a terrorist schooled under the revolutionary Jatin Mukherjee and inspired by Au-

robindo Ghose, left Calcutta on a revolutionary mission to obtain German arms for the struggle against the Raj. In that same year, Gandhi returned to India after twenty-one years in South Africa. As Gandhi achieved his extraordinary rise to power in the Congress during the 1920s, Roy acquired his reputation of being “undoubtedly the most colorful of all non-Russian communists in the era of Lenin and Stalin.”²⁴ From 1915 to 1930, Roy moved about on various revolutionary missions, from Mexico to Berlin, and then on to Paris, Zurich, Tashkent, and Moscow. In Mexico, Roy was converted to communism and reputedly helped form the first Communist Party there. In Moscow, he contributed to revolutionary strategy for communist activity in the colonial areas. In Europe, he rose to a position of authority in the Comintern, published a series of books and pamphlets on Marxist theory, and edited a communist newspaper. The achievements of both Gandhi and Roy during this period were spectacular, but in complete contrast.

Rajani Palme Dutt (1896–1974) was born in Cambridge, England, the younger son of Upendra Krishna Dutt, a Bengali physician; his mother, Anna Palme, was Swedish. He was educated at Balliol College, Oxford, earning a first in classics. A near-contemporary of M. N. Roy and of Jawaharlal Nehru, he chose to remain in Great Britain through his lengthy political career. While Roy was virtually self-taught, Dutt, like Nehru and Aurobindo Ghose, had a British education.

Dutt served the cause of international communism and Indian independence in Britain, where, thanks to his politically active father, his home was a forum for English Labor politics. Early on, he became rooted in British Marxism, and his main focus was on furthering the work of the Comintern and the British Communist Party; his was a faith that never wavered. His biographer, John Callaghan, aptly subtitles his book, “A Study in British Stalinism.”²⁵

A notable historical anomaly is that even by age twenty, Dutt’s anti-imperialist communism was so firm that he went to jail for resistance to conscription in the war, while Gandhi, advocate of non-violence, nonetheless supported the World War enthusiastically, recruiting Indian troops for Britain, in the misguided belief that this action would eventually win concessions for India. Dutt had none of Gandhi’s naïve faith in the goodwill of the British Empire. His steady allegiance to Lenin’s theory of imperialism guided all his foreign policy, first when he was the international secretary for the British Labor Research Department, and then when he became a founding member of the British Communist Party in 1920. He remained its chief analyst of Indian affairs, but also wrote extensively on international politics.

At this point, communism brought Dutt and Roy together. Although their connection lasted for less than a decade, until the latter fled from the USSR and then was expelled from the Comintern in 1929, many of their most systematic and piercing insights into Indian politics found expression in the 1920s. In the forum of the Comintern, they often differed. Dutt wanted the British communists to shape the communist party in India, while Roy criticized this proposal

as imperialism in another guise. Roy's first and best critique, *India in Transition* (1922, quoted above) came at the same time as Dutt's groundbreaking report on the organization of the Labour Party along Leninist lines. In 1923 he commenced his extremely influential "Notes of the Month" in issues of the *Labour Monthly* that he continued writing as its editor for fifty years. Equally important were Dutt's books that paralleled Roy's publications: *Modern India* (1926), appearing the same year as Roy's *The Future of Indian Politics*; and *Socialism and the Living Wage* (1927). Roy's expulsion then led him to the Communist International Opposition and later to radical shifts of ideology, but Dutt stayed consistently with the Comintern party line in *Fascism and Social Revolution* (1935), *World Politics* (1936), and *India Today* (1940).

M. N. ROY'S ANALYSIS OF GANDHI'S "REACTIONARY" MOVEMENT

The first detailed Marxist critique of Gandhi appeared in Roy's early book, *India in Transition*, written in Moscow in 1922. The book grew out of discussions that Roy had with Lenin and other communist figures at the Second Congress of the Communist International. At this congress, Roy had argued, contrary to Lenin, that communist policy in the colonial areas must be to support proletarian rather than bourgeois movements. Lenin contended that bourgeois nationalist organizations like the Indian Congress could be considered revolutionary, and since no viable communist parties existed, these organizations deserved support. Roy replied that the Indian Congress and similar agencies could only betray the revolution: an Indian proletariat existed, and must be mobilized behind a communist vanguard. Liberation from imperialism could come only under communist leadership. The Roy–Lenin controversy was clearly over fundamental issues and would have implications for communist strategy in the future.

Roy later reflected upon his differences with Lenin and concluded, "The role of Gandhi was the crucial point of difference. Lenin believed that, as the inspirer and leader of a mass movement, he was a revolutionary. I maintained that, [as] a religious and cultural revivalist, he was bound to be a reactionary socially, however revolutionary he might appear politically." In Roy's view, "The religious ideology preached by him [Gandhi] also appealed to the medieval mentality of the masses. But the same ideology discouraged any revolutionary mass action. The quintessence of the situation, as I analyzed and understood it, was a potentially revolutionary movement restrained by a reactionary ideology." Moreover, "I reminded Lenin of the dictum that I had learnt from him: that without a revolutionary ideology, there could be no revolution."²⁶

These arguments formed the basis of the position on Gandhi that was developed by Roy in *India in Transition*.

The movement for national liberation is a struggle of the native middle-class against the economic and political monopoly of the imperialist bourgeoisie.

But the former cannot succeed in the struggle, nor even threaten its opponent to make substantial concessions, without the support of the masses of the people. Because the Indian middle-class is still weak numerically, economically, and socially, hence the necessity of the nationalism in the name of which the people can be led to fight; the victory gained in this fight, however, will not change very much the condition of those whose blood it will cost.

The discontent and growing unrest among the masses, brought about by economic exploitation intensified during the war, was seized by the Congress under the leadership of the Extremists, and turned into a popular demonstration demanding national liberation. But in spite of their religious idiosyncrasies and orthodox inclinations, the social affiliation of the Extremists is identical with that of the Moderates. In the spontaneous mass-upheavals, they discovered the force which could be utilized for the triumph of the native bourgeoisie. But they could not develop the potentiality of the mass movement by leading it in accordance with its economic and social tendencies. Their tactics were to strengthen the nationalist movement by the questionable method of exploiting the ignorance of the masses. And the best way of exploiting the ignorance of the masses was to make a religion of nationalism. These tactics led to the appearance of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi on the political horizon, and the temporary eclipse of all other politico-social tendencies in the shade of Gandhism, which has reached a crisis after having swept the country for two years.

In Gandhism culminate all the social tendencies that have always differentiated the two principles of Indian nationalism. In fact, Gandhism is the acutest and most desperate manifestation of the forces of reaction, trying to hold their own against the objectively revolutionary tendencies contained in the liberal bourgeois nationalism. The impending wane of Gandhism signifies the collapse of the reactionary forces and their total elimination from the political movement. . . .

The Indian national movement is not a struggle of the commercial and industrial middle-class against decrepit feudalism. The Indian bourgeoisie is not engaged in a class struggle. The basis of the national movement is the rivalry of a weak and suppressed bourgeoisie against its immensely stronger imperialist prototype controlling the state power. . . .

The present awakening is a reaction against the age-long resignation, created by religious teachings and the tenets of spiritual culture. Therefore, it cannot be used for a national movement tending towards the revival of the spiritual civilization of India. Here lies the contradiction in the orthodox nationalism as expressed of late in the cult of Gandhism. It endeavours to utilize the mass energy for the perpetuation or revival of that heritage of national culture which has been made untenable by the awakening of this energy. The orthodox Extremists in control of the Congress, freed from all Moderate influence, assumed the leadership of a popular mass movement national in appearance which contains, nevertheless, a challenge to all the fundamental doctrines of orthodox nationalism. Therefore, the intention of the present Congress, which

has acquired the status of a political party, to unite the people of all classes in a struggle for national liberation to be carried on under the banner of Gandhism, is bound to be defeated. The signs of the impending defeat are already perceptible.

Gandhism will fall victim to its own contradictions. By Gandhism is meant the school of nationalism which has been reigning supreme in the Indian movement during the last three years. It can be put in another way: The Indian national movement, actuated by the spirit of Gandhism, cannot succeed because in that case it would defeat its own end. In spite of the pious desire of its leaders, post-British India cannot and will not become pre-British India. The Indian people will not be able to overthrow foreign domination until and unless all that is cherished by orthodox nationalists have become things of the past, of venerable memory. Sanctimonious antagonism to the "satanic Western civilization," a tendency which in spite of its pathetic impotency, smacks of reaction, cannot be the life of a movement whose success will be marked by the crowning of the native bourgeoisie, who will prove to be as disruptive as the British ruler in so far as the social and religious ideals of orthodox nationalism are concerned. The victory of Indian nationalism will be the victory of the progressive middle-class, which may build a monument to the memory of the Mahatma for the valuable services he rendered them involuntarily, but which will never share his pious indignation against Western civilization, which is after all only a certain stage of social development through which every human community has to pass. This victory will be won, not through "suffering and soul-force," but with blood and tears and will be maintained by blood and iron. But it must come. The introduction of "Western civilization" so heartily hated by Gandhi is the reward of the fierce fight for national independence to which he seeks to lead the people. He is working for something which is mortally antagonistic to the reactionary forces operating through him, and whose standard bearer he unconsciously is.

Before proceeding to review the happenings in the Indian movement since the beginning of the world war from the point of view stated above, it will be worth while to analyse Gandhism, because in it is ample expression of all the ebbing vitality contained in orthodox nationalism. The imminent collapse of Gandhism will close a romantic and exciting chapter of the Indian national movement. It will demonstrate that a socially revolutionary movement cannot be influenced by reactionary forces. It will disclose the incompatibility between the national struggle having for its object the aggrandizement of the bourgeoisie and the revolt of the working masses against class exploitation—a revolt which nevertheless has contributed strength to the Congress in the last years of its activities. . . .

Gandhism is nothing but petty-bourgeois humanitarianism hopelessly bewildered in the clashes of the staggering forces of human progress. The crocodile tears of this humanitarianism are shed ostensibly for the undeniable sufferings of the majority in capitalist society, but they are really caused by grief over the end of the old order, already destroyed or about to be so. It pines for that ancient golden age when the majority were kept in blissful ignorance in order that a few

could roll in idle luxury, undisturbed by the revolt of the discontented; the spiritual culture of which was based on the barbarism of the people at large; the simplicity of which was the sign of its backwardness. This longing glance backward is due, in some cases, to the consummate intrigues of the forces of reaction, and in others, to involuntary subordination to the influence of the same agency. Its tendency towards a sort of religious or utopian socialism proves that Gandhism, as well as its source, Tolstoyism, belongs to the latter category. Or in other words, the services rendered by it to reaction are involuntary. . . .

Gandhi's criticism of modern civilization, that is, capitalist society, is correct. But the remedy he prescribes is not only wrong but impossible. One need not be a sentimental humanitarian, nor a religious fanatic in order to denounce the present order of society in the countries where capitalism rules. But the knowledge of material and social sciences makes one see through the Christian piety of Gandhism, not only Indian, but international (there are Gandhis in every country) and discover the sinister forces of reaction busy in its depths. Its true social character no longer remains unknown on finding such tenets in its philosophy:

"The more we indulge our passions, the more unbridled they become. Our ancestors, therefore, set a limit to our indulgences. They saw that happiness was largely a mental condition. A man is not necessarily happy because he is rich, or unhappy because he is poor. The rich are often seen to be unhappy, the poor to be happy. Millions will always remain poor. Observing all this, our ancestors dissuaded us from luxuries and pleasures."

This sanctimonious philosophy of poverty is not unfamiliar. It has been preached by many prophets who have not only been proved false by history, but the questionableness of their humanitarianism has also been revealed. Such philosophy serves but one object—to guarantee the safety of the vested interests whose character may differ in different epochs but which essentially is always the same, being based on the right of exploitation of man by man.

Capitalist civilization is rotten; but it cannot be avoided. Neither is it permanent. It must pass away in due course of evolution, giving place to a higher order of society, as the ones preceding it were replaced by it. But it will not collapse because sentimental humanitarians find it full of cruelty and injustice. It will break down under the pressure of its own contradictions. Whether we want it or not, it must be lived through somehow. It must be lived through in order that the fetters of moral and material ignorance that kept the human race bound hitherto can be broken, and mankind in all countries may have the facilities to strive for a higher stage of civilization. National freedom will not enable the people of India to go back, but to surge ahead.

In itself capitalist society has many defects; but it is undoubtedly an improvement on the patriarchal or feudal civilization for which Gandhi and his kind pine. Indian society is inevitably heading toward capitalist civilization, in spite of the premonitions of Gandhi, among many other prophets of similar creed. The desire to see it hark back is as futile as to expect a river to rush back to its

source. Caught in the morass of such hopeless contradictions, Gandhism cannot supply the ideology of Indian nationalism. The revolutionary character of the latter is contrary to it. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that Gandhism, better said, the personality of Gandhi, exercised a considerable influence on the Indian movement in the last three years. Or in other words, just about the time that the National Congress was finding the first response among the ranks of the working masses, it came under the domination of a spirit which is essentially reactionary and non-revolutionary in a very frank way.

[M. N. Roy, *India in Transition* (Bombay: Nanchiketa, 1971),
202, 203–204, 205–208, 209–210.]

RAJANI PALME DUTT: AN INDIAN COMMUNIST'S VIEW FROM BRITAIN

Like Roy, Dutt viewed Gandhi in familiar Marxist terms as a tool of the Indian bourgeoisie, collaborating with the capitalist structure established by British colonialism, and thus restraining the revolutionary will of the Indian masses. More than Roy, Dutt appreciated Gandhi's hold on the people and the Congress; but they both emphasized his predominant role as a reactionary. Their participation in this grand intellectual debate over India's history and future gave Marxism its critical force on the subcontinent.

While Roy became a peripheral player in left politics in India, Dutt remained a central ideologue for the Communist Party of India for half a century. Disputes and questions were often referred for resolution to "RPD." A prominent communist historian of premodern India said in the 1960s that when he wanted to know about the twentieth century in India he turned to the works of Palme Dutt.

In 1965 Leonard Gordon interviewed Palme Dutt at the headquarters of the British Communist Party. Dutt asked, "Are you a communist?" Gordon said "No." "Then," Dutt replied, "you won't be able to understand anything that I have to say."

The following excerpts from Dutt's *India Today* contain a trenchant analysis of Gandhi's leadership. Having already surveyed the events of 1919 to 1922 that led up to Gandhi's first non-cooperation movement, Dutt takes issue with the ostensible reasons for which Gandhi called it off after Chauri Chaura, in 1922.

The dominant leadership of the Congress associated with Gandhi called off the movement because they were afraid of the awakening mass activity; and they were afraid of the mass activity because it was beginning to threaten those propertied class interests with which they themselves were still in fact closely linked.

Not the question of "violence" or "non-violence," but the question of class interest in opposition to the mass movement, was the breaking-point of the national struggle in 1922. This was the rock on which the movement broke. This was the real meaning of "Non-Violence."

The new factor which developed for the first time in the middle years of the nineteen-twenties, and gave the decisive impetus to the new wave of struggle,

though not yet its leadership, was the emergence of the industrial working class as an independent force, conducting its own struggle with unexampled energy and heroism, and beginning to develop its own leadership. With this advance the new ideology of the working class, or socialism, began to develop for the first time as a political factor in India, and the influence of its ideas began to penetrate the youth and the left sections of Indian Nationalism, bringing new life and energy and wider horizons. . . .

In this critical balance of forces, with the certainty of big new struggles ahead in a far more advanced situation than a decade previously, the right-wing leadership once again turned to Gandhi, whom they had previously thrust aside, and whose star now once again rose. At the Calcutta session at the end of 1928 Gandhi returned to active leadership of the Congress. Whatever the views of the moderate leaders might be with regard to his personal idiosyncrasies, there was no question that he was the most subtle and experienced politician of the older group, with unrivalled mass prestige which world publicity had now enhanced as the greatest Indian figure; the ascetic defender of property in the name of the most religious and idealist principles of humility and love of poverty; the invincible metaphysical-theological casuist who could justify and reconcile anything and everything in an astounding tangle of explanations and arguments which in a man of common clay might have been called dishonest quibbling, but in the great ones of the earth like MacDonald or Gandhi is recognised as a higher plane of spiritual reasoning; the prophet who by his personal saintliness and selflessness could unlock the door to the hearts of the masses where the moderate bourgeois leaders could not hope for a hearing—and the best guarantee of the shipwreck of any mass movement which had the blessing of his association.²⁷ This Jonah of revolution, this general of unbroken disasters was the mascot of the bourgeoisie in each wave of the developing Indian struggle. So appeared once again the characteristic feature of modern Indian politics, the unwritten article of every successive Indian constitution—the indispensability of Gandhi (actually the expression of the precarious balance of class forces). All the hopes of the bourgeoisie (the hostile might say, the hopes of imperialism) were fixed on Gandhi as the man to ride the waves, to unleash just enough of the mass movement in order to drive a successful bargain, and at the same time to save India from revolution. . . .

Thus on the eve of rising mass struggle Gandhi proclaimed the fight on two fronts, not only against British rule, but against the internal enemy in India. This conception of the fight on two fronts corresponds to the role of the Indian bourgeoisie, alarmed as it sees the ground sinking beneath its feet with the growing conflict of imperialism and the mass movement, compelled to undertake leadership of the struggle, despite the “mad risk” (in Gandhi’s phrase in his letter to the Viceroy), in order to hold it within bounds (“to sit still would be to give rein to both the forces above mentioned”), and seeking to conciliate both with the magic wand of “non-violence.” However, “non-violence,” like the notorious “non-intervention” of later days practised by the democratic Powers in

relation to Spain, was “*one-way non-violence*.” It was “non-violence” for the Indian masses, but not for imperialism, which practised violence to its heart’s content—and won the battle.

Gandhi’s strategy corresponded to this conception of the struggle. Given this understanding, that it was not a strategy intended to lead to the victory of independence, but to find the means in the midst of a formidable revolutionary wave to maintain leadership of the mass movement and yet place the maximum bounds and restraints upon it, it was a skilful and able strategy. This was shown already in his brilliant choice of the first objective of the campaign and the method of conducting it. He decided to lead the fight against the salt monopoly of the Government. This diverted the fight from the possibility of participation by the industrial working class, the one force which Gandhi has made clear in every utterance that he fears in India; it was capable of enlisting the support and popular interest of the peasantry, while diverting them from any struggle against the landlords. . . .

So followed the march to Dandi, on the seashore, by Gandhi and his seventy-eight hand-picked followers, dragging on through three precious weeks, with the news-reel cameras of the world clicking away, while the masses were called on to wait expectant. The enormous publicity which was given to this Salt March through the Press, the cinema and every other device, was regarded by the Congress leadership as a triumph of strategy for awakening and mobilising the masses; but, while it is undoubtedly true that it did help to perform this function for the more backward elements among the masses, the free encouragement and permission given by the imperialist authorities for this publicity, in striking contrast to their later attitude (and to their very alert arrest of Subhas Bose, the leading left nationalist, even before Independence Day, before the struggle opened), was evidently not simple naivete and failure to understand its significance, but, on the contrary, very sharp understanding of its significance and direct help to ensure the diversion of the mass movement into the channels which were being prepared for it by Gandhi.

Nevertheless, the moment the three weeks were completed with the ceremonial boiling of salt by Gandhi on the seashore on April 6 (not followed by arrest), the overwhelming mass movement which broke loose throughout the country took the leadership on both sides by surprise. The official instructions given were confined to the most limited and relatively harmless forms of civil disobedience: violation of the Salt Law, boycott of foreign cloth, picketing of the foreign cloth shops and Government liquor shops. . . .

The mass movement which developed already in April went considerably beyond these simple limits, with rising strikes, powerful mass demonstrations, the Chittagong Armoury Raid in Bengal, the incidents at Peshawar, which was in the hands of the people for ten days, and the beginnings of spontaneous no-rent movements by the peasants in a number of localities, especially in the United Provinces, where the Congress vainly sought to mediate on a basis of 50 per cent payment of rents. . . .

When it became clear that the power of the mass movement was exceeding the limits set it, and that the authority of Gandhi, who had been left at liberty, was in danger of waning, on May 5 the Government arrested Gandhi. The response to the arrest was shown in the wave of hartals and mass strikes all over India. In the industrial town of Sholapur in the Bombay Presidency, with 140,000 inhabitants, of whom 50,000 were textile operatives, the workers held possession of the town for a week, replacing the police and establishing their own administration, until martial law was proclaimed on May 12. . . .

Imperialist repression was limitless. Ordinances followed one another in rapid succession, creating a situation comparable to martial law. In June the Congress and all its organisations were declared illegal. Official figures recorded 60,000 civil resisters sentenced in less than a year up to the Irwin–Gandhi Agreement in the spring of 1931. . . .

Imprisonment was the least of the forms of repression. The jails were filled to overflowing, and it was clear that wholesale imprisonment was powerless to check the movement. Therefore the principal weapon employed was physical terrorism. The records of indiscriminate lathi charges, beating up, firing on unarmed crowds, killing and wounding of men and women, and punitive expeditions made an ugly picture. The strictest measures were employed to cast a veil of censorship over the whole proceedings; but the careful records of the Congress provide volumes of certified and attested facts and incidents which throw some light on the brutality employed.

Nevertheless, the power of the movement during 1930, exceeding every calculation of the authorities, and growing in spite of repression, began to raise the most serious alarm in the imperialist camp, which already found open expression by the summer of 1930, especially in the British trading community, who were hard hit by the boycott. This was especially noticeable in Bombay, where was the centre of strength of the industrial working class, where repression was most severe, but where the movement was strongest, and again and again held possession of the streets, despite repeated police charges, in mass demonstrations which the Congress leaders vainly begged to disperse, and in which the red flags were conspicuous beside the Congress flags, or even predominated. . . .

Thus the alarm grew on both sides; and on the basis of this mutual alarm there was the possibility of a settlement—against the Indian people. . . .

The bait was thus held out in a rotund phrase which in hard practice committed the Government to nothing, as subsequent events were to show. The Round Table Conference was then adjourned to enable the Congress to attend.

On January 26 Gandhi and the Congress Working Committee were released unconditionally and given freedom to meet. Gandhi declared that he left prison with “an absolutely open mind.” Prolonged negotiations followed. On March 4 the Irwin–Gandhi Agreement was signed, and the struggle was declared provisionally suspended.

The Irwin–Gandhi Agreement secured not a single aim of the Congress struggle (not even the repeal of the Salt Tax). Civil Disobedience was to be withdrawn. Congress was to participate in the Round Table Conference, which it had sworn to boycott. Not a single concrete step to self-government was granted. The basis of discussion at the Round Table Conference was to be a Federal Constitution with “Indian responsibility”—but there were to be “reservations of safeguards in the interests of India.” The Ordinances were to be withdrawn and political prisoners released—but not prisoners guilty of “violence” or “incitement to violence” or soldiers guilty of disobeying orders. Freedom of boycott of foreign goods was to be allowed—but not “exclusively against British goods,” not “for political ends,” not with any picketing that might be regarded as involving “coercion, intimidation, restraint, hostile demonstration, obstruction to the public.” And so on with the clauses, which gave with one hand and took away with another. The maximum gain was the right of peaceful boycott of foreign cloth—the one positive element which very clearly pointed to the decisive interests on the Indian side behind the agreement. . . .

Three main tendencies or types of general social outlook exist to-day in the national movement.

The first is the conservative (in the social sense, not necessarily in the political sense or relation to imperialism) or backward-looking tendency, which seeks to build its programme on the basis of an idealised ancient Indian civilisation, purged of its grosser evils, but retaining the essential tenets and institutions of Hinduism; looks with horror on modern industrialism (equally identified, without distinction, as capitalism or communism); and believes itself, with its hand-spinning and advocacy of a primitive agricultural life as the ideal, to represent the aspirations of the peasantry.

The second is the powerful tendency of the industrial bourgeoisie, which seeks to build a modernised capitalist India after the Western model, but at the same time fears the inevitable accompanying growth in strength and rising demands of the industrial working class and of peasant discontent, and sometimes consequently attempts to idealise its aims under general phrases of a semi-socialist character, “socialism without class struggle” or “Indian socialism,” used to denote a vague humanitarianism and class-conciliation.

The third is the rising tendency of socialism, which in its clearest form represents the conscious expression of the aim of the industrial working class and of the basic transformation of Indian society, and with very varying degrees of clearness is winning wide and increasing support within the national movement, especially among the younger generation.

The still-continuing importance of the first of these tendencies in the present period should by no means be under-estimated, although it has no firm social basis, nor any practical possibility of the realisation of its aims. . . .

The positive programme put forward by the representatives of this tendency is one of village reconstruction and opposition to industrialism. . . .

Here the familiar bourgeois essence shows through the idealistic cover.

The immediate practical expression of this programme is found in the propagation of the Charkha or spinning-wheel, the Takli or distaff, the promotion of the use of Khadi or Indian hand-made cloth as a national symbol, and the development of village craft industries. . . .

The propaganda of a primitive economy as a solution for India's problems is reactionary, not only because it leads in the opposite direction to that in which the solution must be sought (for the existing evils of poverty and misery are rooted in primitive technique, which is itself rooted in the social system of exploitation under imperialism), but because it serves as a diversion from the basic social tasks confronting the peasantry and the masses of the people. Agricultural development is impossible without tackling the question of the land, of landlordism and the re-division of the land. But here the voice of the agricultural idealists and worshippers of the vanished village community becomes weak and falters, and disappears into a vague and shame-faced defence of landlordism. . . .

Herein lies the practical significance of this preaching from the standpoint of the big bourgeoisie, who tolerate and even encourage its Utopian yearnings and naive fantasies with a smile, because they know its business value for protecting their class interests and assisting to hold in the masses and maintain class peace. The social significance of Gandhi's historical role as the chosen representative and ablest leader of bourgeois nationalism in the critical transitions of the modern period has in practice coincided with his political role, despite the superficial contradiction between his social philosophy and the bourgeois outlook. The glaring contradictions and inadequacies in his many utterances and teaching, which can be easily picked out and exposed by the most elementary critic, are in fact the key to his unique significance and achievement. *No other leader could have bridged the gap, during this transitional period, between the actual bourgeois direction of the national movement and the awakening, but not yet conscious masses. Both for good and for evil Gandhi achieved this, and led the movement, even appearing to create it. This role only comes to an end in proportion as the masses begin to reach clear consciousness of their own interests, and the actual class forces and class relations begin to stand out clear in the Indian scene, without need of mythological concealments.*

[From R. Palme Dutt, *India Today*, 3rd ed. (1940; Lahore: Book Traders, 1979), 353, 357–359 365–371, 373–374, 622–624, 626, 628–629.]

MUSLIM RESPONSES TO THE MAHATMA: MOHAMED AND SHAUKAT ALI—ALLIES THEN ADVERSARIES

Like Subhas and Sarat Chandra Bose, slightly younger contemporaries who appeared a little later on the scene, Mohamed Ali (1878–1931) and Shaukat Ali (1873–1938) were

brothers implacably opposed to the Raj; like the Boses, they initially allied themselves with Gandhi but finally became disillusioned with him and the Congress. A difference from the Bose brothers, though, was that the Alis were Muslim.

Shaukat and his younger brother Mohamed were born into a highly respected family in the Muslim-ruled principality of Rampur, about 100 miles east of Delhi. They were raised in a conservative social, cultural, and political world that was just beginning to be influenced by the Western ways of the British. Both brothers broke with family tradition by studying English at local schools, then absorbing the advanced amalgam of modern Western and Islamic learning offered by the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental School and College in Aligarh. Here Mohamed so excelled in his studies that Shaukat raised funds to send him to London, where he graduated with honors in history in 1902, having taken a special interest in early Muslim conquests and empires.

Eventually, however, these thoroughly Anglicized brothers found it increasingly difficult to remain faithful to Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan's policy of loyal support to their rulers. This was because of the quickening spirit of nationalism in other parts of the Islamic world, as well as in India, that accompanied the progressive dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire by European nations, and the consequent Ottoman decision in October 1914 to enter World War I on the side of Germany and Austria-Hungary. Growing sympathy among Indian Muslims for the Ottoman sultan was based on a traditional idea that the head of the strongest Islamic state was also the head of Muslims everywhere. Thus, nascent national feeling among Muslims in India for a time took the form of looking abroad for their symbolic leader. In this period, which ended in 1924 when the new Turkish government abolished the institution of the caliphate, the most vigorous English-speaking defenders in India of the rights of the Ottoman caliph were the Ali brothers.

Indian political developments awakened the brothers' attention early: they joined the Muslim League on its founding in 1906, and helped in drawing up its constitution. The anguish felt by many Indian Muslims over the conquest of Ottoman territory in the Balkans prompted Mohamed to organize a medical mission for the beleaguered Turks. The news that the Ottoman Empire had joined Germany and Austria-Hungary, thus becoming Britain's enemy in World War I, drove the brothers to despair. The British, suspicious of their pan-Islamic sentiments, sent them to a small town in central India and interned them there until the war was over.

Even before World War I ended, Gandhi made efforts to secure the brothers' release from internment. But not until the Ottoman Empire surrendered were they set free—only to find the realms of the caliph further diminished by the loss of all non-Turkish territory. They soon became the leaders of the *Khilāfat* movement, which called for the preservation of the Ottoman caliph's sovereignty over the holy places of Islam—Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem. Motivated in part by a romantic attachment to the last great Islamic empire, in part by suspicion that the new Arab rulers of the homelands of Islam were puppets of the British, and above all by fears that Islam itself was in grave danger, many Indian Muslims quickly responded to the calls for action made by Mohamed and Shaukat Ali and other leaders. The Ali brothers accepted Gandhi's plan that they

join with the Congress in a non-violent movement of non-cooperation with British institutions in India. Hopes were high in 1920 and 1921 that this alliance would grow into a solid and permanent unity between Hindus and Muslims, but outbreaks of violence caused Gandhi to cancel the movement, and led to the breakdown of the alliance.

To the end, the Ali brothers wanted a united and independent India, but they could not find a practical way to reconcile the differences that divided Muslims and Hindus. Muslims were infuriated, for example, when Hindu religious processions with loudly beating drums passed mosques during the times of prayer, and Hindus were outraged at Muslim killings of cows. In the long history of conflict and (sometimes willing, sometimes reluctant) coexistence between the two communities, Mohamed and Shaukat Ali created with Gandhi a moment of heartfelt cooperation; but in the process religious passions were awakened that drove the wedge of division ever deeper.

MOHAMED ALI: TO SELF-GOVERNMENT THROUGH HINDU–MUSLIM UNITY, NON-VIOLENCE, AND SACRIFICE

In his 1923 presidential address to the Indian National Congress, Mohamed Ali voiced the aspirations that had led him to join the Congress and work with Gandhi in the 1920–1922 non-cooperation movement.

I had long been convinced that here in this country of hundreds of millions of human beings, intensely attached to religions, and yet infinitely split up into communities, sects and denominations, Providence had created for us the mission of solving a unique problem and working out a new synthesis, which was nothing less than a Federation of Faiths. As early as 1904, when I had been only two years in India after my return from Oxford, I had given to this ideal a clear, if still somewhat hesitating expression, in an address delivered at Ahmedabad on the “Proposed Mohammedan University.” “Unless some new force”—this is what I had said on that occasion—“unless some new force, other than the misleading unity of opposition, unites this vast continent of India, it will either remain a geographical misnomer, or what I think it will ultimately do, become a Federation of Religions.” . . . For more than twenty years I have dreamed the dream of a federation, grander, nobler and infinitely more spiritual than the United States of America, and to-day when many a political Cassandra prophesies a return to the bad old days of Hindu–Muslim dissensions, I still dream that old dream of “United Faiths of India.” It was in order to translate this dream into reality that I had launched my weekly newspaper, and had significantly called it *The Comrade*—“comrade of all and partisan of none.” . . .

Jesus counselled the upholders of the *lex talionis* [law of retaliation] who claimed an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth that he who had been smitten on one cheek should turn the other cheek also to the smiter. So much for the

foreign tyrant. As for his own countryman, the Jew, who, falling a victim to his own weakness and a fear of the Gentile masters of Judea, had become a publican or tax-collector on behalf of the foreigner, he too could easily claim a share in the abounding love of Jesus. The idea of being all-powerful by suffering and resignation, and of triumphing over force by purity of heart, is as old as the days of Abel and Cain, the first progeny of Man. But since it so eminently suited the conditions of the times of Jesus, and the record of his ministry, however inadequate or defective, has still preserved for us this part of his teachings in some detail, it has come to be regarded by Christians, and even by many non-Christians as an idea peculiar to Jesus.

Be that as it may, it was just as peculiar to Mahatma Gandhi also; but it was reserved for a Christian government to treat as a felon the most Christ-like man of our times and to penalise as a disturber of the public peace the one man engaged in public affairs who comes nearest to the Prince of Peace. The political conditions of India just before the advent of the Mahatma resembled those of Judea [under foreign rule] on the eve of the advent of Jesus, and the prescription that he offered to those in search of a remedy for the ills of India was the same that Jesus had dispensed before in Judea. Self-purification through suffering; a moral preparation for the responsibilities of government; self-discipline as the condition precedent of Swaraj—this was the Mahatma's creed and conviction; and those of us who have been privileged to have lived in the glorious year that culminated in the Congress session at Ahmedabad [in 1921] have seen what a remarkable and what a rapid change he wrought in the thoughts, feelings and actions of such large masses of mankind. . . .

Friends, I have said all that I could say on the Hindu-Muslim question and if after all this lengthy dissertation I leave any Hindu or Muslim still unconvinced of the necessity of co-operation among ourselves and non-cooperation with our foreign masters, I can say no more and must acknowledge myself beaten. One thing is certain, and it is this that neither can the Hindus exterminate the Muslims to-day nor can the Muslims get rid of the Hindus. If the Hindus entertain any such designs they must know that they lost their opportunity when Mohammad bin Qasim landed on the soil of Sind twelve hundred years ago. Then the Muslims were few, and to-day they number more than seventy millions. And if the Muslims entertain similar notions, they too have lost their opportunity. They should have wiped out the whole breed of Hindus when they ruled from Kashmir to Cape Comorin and from Karachi to Chit-tagong. And as the Persian proverb says, the blow that is recalled after the fight must be struck on one's own jaw. If they cannot get rid of one another, the only thing to do is to settle down to co-operate with one another, and while the Muslims must remove all doubts from the Hindu minds about their desire for Swaraj for its own sake and their readiness to resist all foreign aggression [i.e., from Afghanistan], the Hindus must similarly remove from the Muslim minds all apprehensions that the Hindu majority is synonymous with Muslim servitude. . . .

Warfare, according to the Quran, is an evil; but persecution is a worse evil, and may be put down with the weapons of war. When persecution ceases, and every man is free to act with the sole motive of securing divine goodwill, warfare must cease. These are the limits of violence in Islam, as I understand it, and I cannot go beyond these limits without infringing the Law of God. But I have agreed to work with Mahatma Gandhi, and our compact is that as long as I am associated with him I shall not resort to the use of force even for purposes of self-defence. And I have willingly entered into this compact because I think we can achieve victory without violence; that the use of violence for a nation of three hundred and twenty millions of people should be a matter of reproach to it; and, finally, that victory achieved with violence must be not the victory of all sections of the nation, but mainly of the fighting classes, which are more sharply divided in India from the rest of the nation than perhaps anywhere else in the world. Our Swaraj [self-government] must be the Raj [government] of all, and, in order to be that, it must have been won through the willing sacrifice of all. If this is not so, we shall have to depend for its maintenance as well on the prowess of the fighting classes, and this we must do. Swaraj must be won by the minimum sacrifice of the maximum number and not by the maximum sacrifice of the minimum number.

[From *Select Writings and Speeches of Maulana Mohamed Ali*, ed. Afzal Iqbal (Lahore: M. Ashraf, 1944), 2:117–118, 141–142, 145, 188.]

MOHANDAS GANDHI: RESPONSE TO THE ALI BROTHERS' CRITIQUE

By 1930 the communal split was apparent: both Ali brothers denounced Gandhi as a tool of the Hindu Mahasabha. At once suspicious of and disillusioned with the Mahatma, and convinced by the growing appeal of Muslim separatism, the Ali brothers departed irrevocably from a nationalist movement that they could no longer deem inclusive of their interests. When Gandhi came forth with his new call for mass civil disobedience, it no longer resonated with the Alis as it had ten years earlier. Mohamed condemned Gandhi as “fighting for the supremacy of Hinduism and the submergence of Muslims.”²⁸ Both brothers urged Muslims not to join the salt satyagraha.

Shortly before he died, Mohamed Ali championed the two causes closest to his heart: the “supernationalist” freedom of India, and the integrity of the world of Islam.

The one purpose for which I came [to speak] is this—that I want to go back to my country if I can go back with the substance of freedom in my hand. Otherwise I will not go back to a slave country. I would even prefer to die in a foreign country so long as it is a free country, and if you do not give us freedom in India you will have to give me a grave here. . . .

The real problem which is upsetting us all the time has been . . . the Hindu–Muslim problem; but that is no problem at all. The fact is that the Hindu–Muslim

difficulty . . . is of your own creation. But not altogether. It is the old maxim of “divide and rule.” But there is a division of labour here. We divide and you rule. The moment we decide not to divide you will not be able to rule as you are doing to-day. . . .

I belong to two circles of equal size, but which are not concentric. One is India, and the other is the Muslim world. When I came to India in 1920 at the head of the Khilafat Delegation [to defend the traditional position of the Turkish caliph], my friends said: “You must have some sort of a crest for your stationery.” I decided to have it with two circles on it. In one circle was the word “India”; in the other circle was Islam, with the word “Khilafat.” We as Indian Muslims came in both circles. We belong to these two circles, each of more than 300 millions, and we can leave neither. We are not nationalists but supernationalists, and I as a Muslim say that “God made man and the Devil made the nation.” Nationalism divides; our religion binds. No religious wars, no crusades, have seen such holocausts and have been so cruel as your last war [World War I], and that was a war of your nationalism.

[From Mohamed Ali, *Select Speeches and Writings*, 2:350, 355–357, 361.]

Gandhi replied to them on the eve of the march, on March 12, 1930.

Having lost caste with some Mussalmans, there are numerous misrepresentations about me to be seen in the Muslim Press. A friend has brought the latest to my notice. It is to the effect that I have prevented the Imam Saheb, an inmate of the Ashram and an honored life co-worker, from joining the Ashram group of civil resisters, on the plea that he could not subscribe to non-violence as an article of faith for achieving the national purpose. The fact is quite the reverse. Imam Saheb’s name is on my list. He gave it after full deliberation. I personally never had any difficulty about reading the message of non-violence in the Koran. Imam Saheb is not joining the march as he is too weak to undertake the exertion. But it is quite likely that he may offer himself for arrest when the actual manufacture of contraband salt commences. Two Mussalmans are actually enlisted for the march, as they have no difficulty about subscribing to the creed of non-violence for the purpose of swaraj. Thus the insinuation referred to is baseless in two ways. But the moment there is suspicion about a person’s motives, everything he does becomes tainted. The present plan of campaign is so designed as ultimately to dispel all suspicion. . . .

Maulana²⁹ Shaukat Ali is reported to have said that the independence movement is a movement not for swaraj but for Hindu Raj and against Mussalmans, that therefore the latter should leave it alone. On reading the report I wired to the Maulana inquiring whether he was correctly reported. He has kindly replied confirming the report. The Maulana has launched a grave charge against the movement. It needs to be repudiated once for all. Whatever the movement is, it certainly is not for Hindu Raj, nor is it against Mussalmans. It bears within

itself a complete answer to the charge. The Congress has taken the first step in final non-cooperation. No Congressman can enter the legislatures, much less accept employment under the Government. No Congressman can seek or receive favors from the Government. Does not the Hindu-Muslim question center round a division of political power—spoils of office? How can the movement be anti-Mussalman or for Hindu Raj when no one identified with it has the slightest notion, till independence is reached, of possessing any political power? . . . The only ground for the belief, in so far as I can fathom it, can be that those who are engaged in it must, by its very nature, become more self-reliant, more defiant and more capable of resisting any encroachment on their liberty than before, and that since the vast majority of them are Hindus, they will in course of time become more powerful than the Mussalmans. But such reasoning would be unworthy of the brave Maulana I have known him to be. He must therefore explain to the public what he means by his serious charge.

I grant that if till the end of the chapter only Hindus join the movement in the right spirit, they will become an irresistible force of the right, i.e. non-violent type. But the obvious deduction from this fact is that all those who are keeping aloof should join the movement at the earliest moment. And I prophesy that, if the movement keeps the chalked path, the Maulana and the other Mussalmans, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis, Jews, etc., will join in.

Surely all are equally interested in securing repeal of the salt tax. Do not all need and use salt equally? That is the one tax which is no respecter of persons. . . .

As against this absolutely national method of gaining our end, put the unnatural, artificial and diplomatic method of a Round Table Conference in which conflicting interests will be represented by interested parties, and all the Indian groups together will be moved and dominated by the paramount and all-powerful British group. This conference without the power of the people behind it and composed of the powerful and the weak will bring anything but swaraj. In the existing circumstances therefore it can only result in further consolidating the British power.

Civil resisters can have nothing to do with such a conference. Their business is merely to generate and conserve national strength. They have nothing to do with communalism. But if they are compelled by force of circumstances to countenance a communal solution, they are pledged only to consider such as may be satisfactory to the parties concerned. How the Maulana can call such a movement anti-Muslim or one for obtaining Hindu Raj, passes comprehension.

The fact that those taking part in the movement are preponderantly Hindus is unfortunately true. By proclaiming a boycott the Maulana is helping the process. Even so, there can be no harm, if the Hindu civil resisters are fighting not for themselves but for all—Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis, and others who will make the nation of the future free India. . . .

As for the irritation felt by the Maulana against me personally, I need not say much. Since I have no counter-irritation in me, I prophesy that when his temper

has cooled down and when he discovers that I am not guilty of the many sins he imagines against me, he will restore me to "his pocket" in which I had the honor to be only the other day as it were. For it is not I who have gone out of his pocket. He has thrown me out of it. I am the same little man that I used to be in 1921. I can never be an enemy of Englishmen, even though they may heap further wrongs upon the Everest of wrongs their representatives have already piled. I am too conscious of the imperfections of the species to which I belong to be irritated against any single member thereof. My remedy is to deal with the wrong wherever I see it, not to hurt the wrongdoer, even as I would not like to be hurt for the wrongs I continually do.

[CWMG 43:54–57.]

TERRORISM VERSUS NON-VIOLENCE

From the beginning of the twentieth century, faced with political unrest or opposition of disturbing kinds, the Home Department of the Government of India concentrated much attention on investigating the disturbers. In addition to a host of individual files on people and events, it initiated larger, connected compilations. There were two important series running through most of the first half of the century: the "political trouble" series and the "communism in India" series. There were several volumes in both series, each roughly covering a decade or more. Each book-length, skillfully prepared volume was written by a senior Home Department official and printed for consumption within the Home Department, both for senior police officials and probably for certain officials of the British government. One compilation was published and made public for political purposes: the Rowlatt or Sedition Committee Report, 1918. This report exaggerated the threat posed by the revolutionaries, so that the Rowlatt Bill would be passed and implemented. It provoked considerable political opposition among Indians.

Since undercover political plotters, whether revolutionary terrorists or communists, did not leave a copious written record of their activities, these compilations (along with the files from which they were constructed), constitute one of the best historical records of this activity. In addition to the details of plots against the Raj, the reports had charts, maps, chronological tables of these plottings, and appendices with documents captured from the revolutionaries and communists. One of the documents appended to H. W. Hale, *Political Trouble in India, 1917–1937*, was "Philosophy of the Bombs," from the 1920s and purportedly issued by the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (or Army) (HSRA). Following Aurobindo Ghose in "The Doctrine of Passive Resistance" (on which see chapter 5), it argues for the use of all means including violence against an oppressor. It also makes clear why Gandhi said he had to fight a war on two fronts: against the violence of the oppressor and against the violence of some of his countrymen.

The debate between advocates of terrorism and Gandhi's response can be examined in the context both of specific historical events, and of contemporary political

ideas about the relative merits of violent or non-violent political action. In the months surrounding the civil disobedience campaign of 1930, a brief encapsulation of this crucial moment in Indian history may begin with the end of 1929.

On December 23, 1929, only six days before the annual meeting of the Indian National Congress took place in Lahore, terrorists exploded a bomb under the viceroy Lord Irwin's train as it approached Delhi. Many such acts of terrorism against British Indian government officials and civilians had occurred throughout the independence movement.³⁰ But this failed attempt on Irwin and his entourage may be seen in retrospect as particularly significant, because it triggered a debate among the three parties mentioned in Gandhi's "Letter to Lord Irwin." These were what Gandhi termed, "the organized violent force of the British rule, . . . the growing party of violence," and the party committed to the theory and practice of satyagraha. All three of these parties converged on the specifics of the bomb as a tool of resistance.

A MANIFESTO AGAINST GANDHI, THE IMPOSSIBLE VISIONARY

As the Lahore Congress began on December 30, the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association distributed the following manifesto, aimed at Gandhi's campaign for independence.

To us the Mahatma is an impossible visionary. Non-violence may be a noble Ideal, but it is a thing of the morrow. We can . . . never hope to win our freedom by mere non-violence. The world is armed to the very teeth. And the world is too much with us. All talk of peace may be sincere, but we, of the slave Nation, cannot, and must not, be led by such false Ideology. What Logic, we ask, is there in asking the country to traverse a non-violent path when the world atmosphere is surcharged with violence and exploitation of the weak? We declare with all the emphasis we can command that the youths of the Nation cannot be lured by such mid-summer-night's dream.

We believe in violence, not as an end in itself but as a means to a Noble End. And the votaries of non-violence, as also the advocates of caution and circumspection will readily grant this much at least, that we know how to suffer for, and act up to, our convictions. Shall we here recount all those sacrifices which our comrades have offered at the altar of our common Mother? Many a heart-rending and soul-stirring scene has been enacted inside the four walls of His Majesty's Prison: We have been taken to task for our Terroristic Policy. Our answer is that terrorism is never the object of revolutionaries, nor do they believe that terrorism alone can bring independence. No doubt the revolutionaries think, and rightly, that it is only by resorting to terrorism alone that they can find a most effective means of retaliation. The British Government exists, because the Britishers have been successful in terrorising the whole of India. How

are we to meet this official terrorism? Only counter-terrorism on the part of the revolutionaries can checkmate effectively this bureaucratic bullying. A feeling of utter helplessness pervades society. How can we overcome this fatal despondency? It is only by infusing a real spirit of sacrifice that that lost self-confidence can be restored. Terrorism has its international aspect also. England's enemies, which are many, are drawn towards us by effective demonstration of our strength. That in itself is a great advantage.

[Quoted in H. W. Hale, *Political Trouble in India, 1917-1937*
(Allahabad: Chugh, 1974), 217-218.]

GANDHI'S REPLY: THE CULT OF THE BOMB

The manifesto quoted above, signed by Kartar Singh, president of HSRA, prompted the following response from Gandhi on January 2, 1930, as a summary of the major resolutions he had introduced during the Lahore conference.

If I did not know that violence was like froth coming to the surface in an agitated liquid, I should probably despair of non-violence succeeding in the near future in giving us the freedom which we are all violently-minded and non-violently-minded people yearning for. Happily I have a certain belief based upon ceaseless experience during my tour in the heart of India for the past twelve months very nearly, that the vast masses who have become conscious of the fact that they must have freedom are untouched by the spirit of violence. In spite therefore of sporadic violent outbursts such as the bomb explosion under the Viceregal train I feel that non-violence for our political battle has come to stay. It is because of my increasing faith in the efficacy of non-violence in political warfare and the possibility of its being practised by masses of people that I propose to reason with those who may not be so much saturated with violence as to be beyond the pale of reason.

Let us think then for a moment what would have happened if the Viceroy had been seriously injured or killed. There certainly would have been no meeting of 23rd ultimo and therefore no certainty as to the course to be adopted by the Congress. That surely would have been, to say the least, an undesirable result. Fortunately for us the Viceroy and his party escaped unhurt, and with great self-possession he went through the day's routine as if nothing had happened. I know that those who have no regard even for the Congress, who hope nothing from it and whose hope lies only through violence, will not be affected by this speculative reasoning. But the others, I hope, will not fail to realize the truth of the argument and to put together several important deductions that can be drawn from the hypothetical case put by me.

Take again the net result of political violence practised in this country. Every time violence has occurred we have lost heavily, that is to say, military expenditure has risen. As against this, I am willing to put the Morley-Minto reforms,

the Montagu reforms and the like. But an ever widening circle of politicians is now beginning to realize that they have been like toys given to us against heavy economic burden. Whilst paltry concessions have been made, a few more Indians have found employment under Government, the masses in whose name, and for whose sake, we want freedom, have had to bear greater burdens without having any return whatsoever therefor. If we would only realize that it is not by terrorising the foreigner that we shall gain freedom, but by ourselves shedding fear and teaching the villager to shed his own fear that we shall gain true freedom, we would at once perceive that violence is suicidal.

Then consider its reaction on ourselves. From violence done to the foreign ruler, violence to our own people whom we may consider to be obstructing the country's progress is an easy natural step. Whatever may have been the result of violent activities in other countries and without reference to the philosophy of non-violence, it does not require much intellectual effort to see that if we resort to violence for ridding society of the many abuses which impede our progress, we shall but add to our difficulties and postpone the day of freedom. The people unprepared for reform because unconvinced of their necessity will be madened with rage over their coercion, and will seek the assistance of the foreigner in order to retaliate. Has not this been happening before our eyes for the past many years of which we have still painfully vivid recollections?

Take now the positive side of the argument. When, that is in 1920, non-violence came to be part of the Congress creed, the Congress became a transformed body as if by magic. Mass awakening came no one knows how. Even remote villages were stirred. Many abuses seemed to have been swept away. The people became conscious of their power. They ceased to fear authority. . . . If the march of non-violence had not been interrupted by events culminating in Chauri Chaura, I make bold to say that we would have been today in full possession of swaraj. No one has been found to dispute this proposition. But many have shaken their heads as they have said, "But you can't teach non-violence to the masses. It is only possible for individuals and that too in rare cases." This is, in my opinion, a gross self-deception. If mankind was not habitually non-violent, it would have been self-destroyed ages ago. But in the duel between forces of violence and non-violence the latter have always come out victorious in the end. The truth is that we have had patience enough to wait and apply ourselves whole-heartedly to the spread of non-violence among the people as a means for political ends.

We are now entering upon a new era. Our immediate objective and not our distant goal is complete independence. Is it not obvious that if we are to evolve the true spirit of independence amongst the millions, we shall only do so through non-violence and all it implies? It is not enough that we drive out Englishmen by making their lives insecure through secret violence. That would lead not to independence but to utter confusion. . . . Let those who are not past reason then cease either secretly or openly to endorse activities such as their latest

bomb outrage. Rather let them openly and heartily condemn these outrages, so that our deluded patriots may for want of nourishment to their violent spirit realize the futility of violence and the great harm that violent activity has every time done.

[CWMG 42:361–364.]

*KARTAR SINGH’S REJOINDER:
“THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE BOMBS”*

Kartar Singh immediately responded to this in a more fully developed second manifesto for the HSRA, entitled “The Philosophy of the Bombs.” Singh began by referring directly to the failed bomb attack on Irwin, regretting its unfortunate failure and concluding, “If fortunately, the explosion had been powerful enough to kill the Viceroy, one more enemy of India would have met a well deserved doom.”³¹

VIOLENCE OR NON-VIOLENCE

Let us, first of all, take up the question of violence and non-violence. . . . When a revolutionary believes certain things to be his right, he asks for them, argues for them, wills to attain them with all the soul-force at his command, stands the greatest amount of suffering for them, is always prepared to make the highest sacrifice for their attainment, and also backs his efforts with all the physical force he is capable of. . . . While the revolutionaries stand for winning independence by all the forces, physical as well as moral, at their command, the advocates of soul-force would like to ban the use of physical force. The question really, therefore, is not whether you will have violence or non-violence, but whether you will have soul-force plus physical force or soul-force alone.

OUR IDEAL

The revolutionaries believe that the deliverance of their country will come through Revolution. The Revolution they are constantly working and hoping for, will not only express itself in the form of an armed conflict between the foreign government and its supporters and the people, it will also usher in a New Social Order. The revolution will ring the death knell of capitalism and class distinctions and privileges. It will bring joy and prosperity to the starving millions who are seething today under the terrible yoke of both foreign and Indian exploitation. It will bring the nation into its own. It will give birth to a new State—a new social order. Above all, it will establish the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and will for ever banish social parasites from the seat of political power.

TERRORISM

The revolutionaries already see the advent of the revolution in the restlessness of youth, in its desire to break free from the mental bondage and religious superstitions that hold them. As the youth will get more and more saturated with the psychology of revolution, it will come to have a clearer realization of national bondage and a growing, intense, unquenchable thirst for freedom. It will grow, this feeling of bondage, this insatiable desire for freedom, till, in their righteous anger, the infuriated youth will begin to kill the oppressors. Thus has terrorism been born in the country. It is a phase, a necessity, an inevitable phase of the revolution. Terrorism is not the complete revolution and the revolution is not complete without terrorism. This thesis can be supported by an analysis of any and every revolution in history. Terrorism instills fear in the hearts of the oppressors, it brings hopes of revenge and redemption to the oppressed masses, it gives courage and self-confidence to the wavering, it shatters the spell of the superiority of the ruling class and raises the status of the subject race in the eyes of the world, because it is the most convincing proof of a nation's hunger for freedom. Here in India, as in other countries in the past, terrorism will develop into the revolution, and the revolution into independence, social, political and economic. . . .

THE CONGRESS AND THE REVOLUTIONARIES

Meanwhile, what has Congress been doing? It has changed its creed from swaraj to complete independence. As a logical sequence to this, one would expect it to declare war on the British Government. Instead, we find, it has declared war against the Revolutionaries. The first offensive of the Congress came in the form of a resolution deploring the attempt made on the 23rd December 1929, to blow up the Viceroy's special. It was drafted by Gandhi and he fought tooth and nail for it, with the result, that it was passed by a trifling majority of 81 in a house of 1713.³² Was even this bare majority a result of honest political convictions? Let us quote the opinion of Sarla Devi Chaudhrani, who has been a devotee of the Congress all her life, in reply. She says, "I discovered in the course of my conversations with a good many of the Mahatma's followers that it was only their senses of personal loyalty to him that was keeping them back from an expression of the independent views and preventing them from voting against any resolution whatsoever that was fathered by Mahatmaji." . . .

GANDHI ON WAR PATH

Having achieved a victory which cost him more than a defeat, Gandhi has returned to the attack in his article "The Cult of the Bomb." We will give it our closest attention before proceeding further. That article consists of three things,

his faith, his opinion and his arguments. We will not discuss what is a matter of faith with him because reason has little in common with faith. Let us then take such of his opinions as are backed by arguments and his arguments proper, against what he calls violence and discuss them one by one.

DO THE MASSES BELIEVE IN NON-VIOLENCE?

He thinks that on the basis of his experience during his latest tour in the country, he is right in believing that the large masses of Indian Humanity are yet untouched by the spirit of violence and that non-violence has come to stay as a political weapon. Let him not delude himself on the experiences of his latest tour in the country. Though it is true that the average leader confines his tours to places where only the mail train can conveniently land him, while Gandhi has extended his tour limit to where a motor car can take him, the practice, of staying only with the richest people in the places visited, of spending most of his time on being complimented by his devotees in private and public and of granting Darshan, now and then, to the illiterate masses, whom he claims to understand so well, disqualifies him from claiming to know the mind of the masses. No man can claim to know a people's mind by seeing them from the public platform and giving them Darshana and Updesh. He can at most claim to have told the masses what he thinks about things. Has Gandhi, during recent years mixed in the social life of the masses? Has he sat with the peasant round the evening fire and tried to know what he thinks? Has he passed a single evening in the company of a factory labourer and shared with him his vows? We have, and therefore we can claim to know what the masses think. We assure Gandhi, that the average Indian, like the average human being, understands little of the fine theological niceties about "ahimsa" and "loving one's enemy." The way of the world is like this. You have a friend: you love him, sometimes so much that you even die for him. You have an enemy, you shun him, you fight against him and if possible, kill him. The gospel of the revolutionaries is simple and straight. It is what it has been since the days of Adam and Eve and no man has any difficulty about understanding it. We affirm that the masses of India are solidly with us because we know it from personal experience. The day is not far off when they will flock in their thousands to work the will of the revolution. . . .

NO BULLYING PLEASE

Gandhi has called upon all those who are not past reason to withdraw their support from the revolutionaries and condemn their actions so that "our deluded patriots may, for want of nourishment to their violent spirit, realize the futility of violence and the great harm that violent activities have every time done." How easy and convenient it is to call people deluded, to declare them to be past rea-

son, to call upon the public to withdraw its support and condemn them so that they may get isolated and be forced to suspend their activities, specially when a man holds the confidence of an influential section of the public! It is a pity that Gandhi does not and will not understand revolutionary psychology in spite of his life-long experience of public life. . . . To think that a revolutionary will give up his ideals if public support and appreciation is withdrawn from him, is the highest folly. Many a revolutionary has, ere now stepped on to the scaffold and laid his life down for the cause, regardless of the curses that the constitutionalist agitators rained plentifully upon him. If you will have the revolutionaries suspend their activities, reason with them squarely. This is the one and only way. For the rest let there be no doubt in anybody's mind. A revolutionary is the last person on earth to submit to bullying. . . .

VICTORY OR DEATH

There is no crime that Britain has not committed in India. Deliberate misrule has reduced us to paupers, has "bled us white." As a race and a people we stand dishonored and outraged. Do people still expect us to forget or forgive? We shall have our revenge—a people's righteous revenge on the Tyrant. Let cowards fall back and cringe for compromise and peace. We ask not for mercy and we give no quarter. Ours is a war to the end—to Victory or Death.

Long live revolution!

[Hale, *Political Trouble in India*, 1917–1937, 206–207, 208, 209–210, 214–215, 216.]

THE GANDHI–AMBEDKAR DEBATE

One of the most unusual thinkers, statesmen, and reformers of twentieth-century India, Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891–1956), was born into the Untouchable Mahar (village servants) caste of Maharashtra. The key to his rise was education. At a time when less than one percent of his caste was literate, Ambedkar secured a BA in Bombay, an MA and PhD from Columbia University in New York, and a DSc from London University; he was also called to the bar from Grey's Inn, London. This extraordinary education, added to his great faith in parliamentary democracy and his lifelong commitment to improving the lives of Untouchables, enabled him not only to stamp his mark on his own caste, but also to improve the status of all of India's lowest castes by means of the Constitution and legal system of his country.

Ambedkar's father had left the traditional low-status work of the Mahars to join the British army. The birth of Bhimrao, his fourteenth child, coincided with a time when a number of Mahars had freed themselves from the village structure and begun to protest the limitations of their status. Ambedkar, pushed by his family and aided by caste Hindu reformers, secured the education that enabled him to organize and dominate this burgeoning movement. The direction was set in the early 1920s: organization

for social and political activity, attempts to secure civil and religious rights, and the building of pride and self-respect. In his thirty-five years as a leader of the movement, Ambedkar's activities paralleled those of African American leaders in the United States: the scholarship and literary interests of W. E. B. DuBois, and the charisma and innovative methods of Martin Luther King.

His earliest efforts included a newspaper, an organization of all "Depressed Classes" in Bombay to present grievances to government, the opening of a hostel to facilitate the education of Untouchables, testimony to government commissions investigating political conditions and education, and the holding of conferences for the Depressed Classes all over the Marathi-speaking area. Not until the 1930s did Ambedkar become an all-India personage. He was selected by the British as a delegate to the London Round Table Conferences (1930–1933), and there, confronted with demands for separate electorates by all the minorities of India, he stated his case for the Untouchables as a minority entitled to its own electorate.

The granting of special electorates for the Untouchables was unacceptable to Gandhi, who began a fast in 1932 against their separation from the Hindu body politic. Faced with the possibility of causing Gandhi's death, Ambedkar very reluctantly capitulated, accepting Gandhi's offer of separate electorates during primary elections, an increased number of reserved seats for Untouchables, and joint electorates for assembly seats. This involved drawing up a schedule of those castes needing special representation, and "Scheduled Castes" became thereafter the governmental name for Untouchables.

From this time on, Gandhi and Ambedkar pursued distinctly separate paths—Gandhi giving the name "harijan" (people of God) to Untouchables and pleading with caste Hindus to abolish Untouchability, and Ambedkar planning a political party. Ambedkar first joined others in attempting to secure temple entry and religious rights for Untouchables. When that failed, he rejected Hinduism and continued the drive toward education. Ambedkar's Independent Labour Party won fourteen seats in the Bombay Legislative Assembly in 1937; those elected under its banner included eleven Scheduled Caste members. The party attempted to abolish hereditary discrimination in village economic structures, to ban the use of the term "harijan," and to secure family-planning measures. Because it was a small minority party, it was unsuccessful, and although Ambedkar never lost faith in the party system, he never found the key to political power for a group that was, by definition, a permanent minority.

More conferences, including one to discuss conversion to another religion, broadened the movement during the 1930s, but Ambedkar also concerned himself with other issues. As Member for Labour in the viceroy's Executive Council, he worked on labor laws and dam projects. He taught at the Government Law College in Bombay. He wrote on the need to reform and liberalize the university system, and on the hypocrisy of the Congress and Gandhi. In 1945 he founded the People's Education Society; a year later he opened Siddharth College in Bombay. But as India drew near to independence, he again stressed separatism from other Hindu groups as the way to empower the Scheduled Castes in the battle for equality and integration. He was now known all over India as Babasaheb ("respected sir"), the champion of the Untouchables.

BHIMRAO RAMJI AMBEDKAR: THE EVILS OF CASTE

In December 1935 Ambedkar was invited to present his ideas on the “problem of caste” at the Annual Conference in Lahore of an organization of Hindu social reformers called the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal. Prior to the conference, which was to have been held in May 1936, members of the Mandal withdrew the invitation, since many caste Hindus of Lahore anticipated Ambedkar’s views and strenuously objected. In the following selection, Ambedkar reiterates many of the points that he had prepared to advance in the Mandal speech. One of the elements of Gandhi’s attitude that most disgusted Ambedkar was the former’s idealization of the *chatur* (four) *varna* system. Gandhi believed that all people could be classed according to occupations of equal dignity within the four broad rubrics of Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra, and that the Untouchables, who fall outside the classical *varna* system, should be included as Shudras. This, of course, was unacceptable to Ambedkar.

I appreciate greatly the honour done me by the Mahatma in taking notice in his *Harijan* of the speech on Caste which I had prepared for the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal. From a perusal of his review of my speech, it is clear that the Mahatma completely dissents from the views I have expressed on the subject of Caste. . . . Whatever the Mahatma may choose to say, my object in publishing the speech was to provoke the Hindus to think, and take stock of their position. I have never hankered for publicity, and if I may say so, I have more of it than I wish or need. But supposing it was out of the motive of gaining publicity that I printed the speech, who could cast a stone at me? Surely not those who, like the Mahatma, live in glass houses. . . .

The principal points which I have tried to make out in my speech may be catalogued as follows: (1) That Caste has ruined the Hindus; (2) That the reorganization of the Hindu Society on the basis of Chaturvarnya is impossible . . . ; (3) That the reorganization of the Hindu Society on the basis of Chaturvarnya is harmful . . . ; (4) That the Hindu Society must be reorganized on a religious basis which would recognize the principles of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity; (5) That in order to achieve this object the sense of religious sanctity behind Caste and *Varna* must be destroyed; (6) That the sanctity of Caste and *Varna* can be destroyed only by discarding the divine authority of the *Shastras*. It will be noticed that the questions raised by the Mahatma are absolutely beside the point, and show that the main argument of the speech was lost upon him.

Let me examine the substance of the points made by the Mahatma. The first point made by the Mahatma is that the texts cited by me are not authentic. I confess I am no authority on this matter. But I should like to state that the texts cited by me are all taken from the writings of the late Mr. Tilak, who was a recognized authority on the Sanskrit language and on the Hindu *Shastras*. His second point is that these *Shastras* should be interpreted not by the learned but the saints; and that as the saints have understood them, the *Shastras* do not support Caste and Untouchability.

As regards the first point, what I [would] like to ask the Mahatma is, what does it avail to anyone if the texts are interpolations, and if they have been differently interpreted by the saints? The masses do not make any distinction between texts which are genuine and texts which are interpolations. The masses do not know what the texts are. They are too illiterate to know the contents of the *Shastras*. They have believed what they have been told, and what they have been told is that the *Shastras* do enjoin as a religious duty the observance of Caste and Untouchability.

With regard to the saints, one must admit that howsoever different and elevating their teachings may have been as compared to those of the merely learned, they have been lamentably ineffective. They have been ineffective for two reasons. Firstly, none of the saints ever attacked the Caste System. . . . They were not concerned with the struggle between men. They were concerned with the relation between man and God. They did not preach that all men were equal. They preached that all men were equal in the eyes of God—a very different and very innocuous proposition, which nobody can find difficult to preach or dangerous to believe in.

The second reason why the teachings of the saints proved ineffective was because the masses have been taught that a saint might break Caste, but the common man must not. A saint therefore never became an example to follow. . . .

The third point made by the Mahatma is that a religion professed by Chaitanya, Jnyandeo, Tukaram, Tiruvalluvar, Ramkrishna Paramahansa, etc., cannot be devoid of merit as is made out by me, and that a religion has to be judged not by its worst specimens but by the best it might have produced. . . .

The argument of the Mahatma that Hinduism would be tolerable if only many were to follow the example of the saints is fallacious. . . . By citing the names of such illustrious persons as Chaitanya, etc. what the Mahatma seems to suggest in its broadest and simplest form is that Hindu society can be made tolerable and even happy without any fundamental change in its structure if all the high caste Hindus can be persuaded to follow a high standard of morality in their dealings with the low caste Hindus. I am totally opposed to this kind of ideology. I can respect those of the caste-Hindus who try to realize a high social ideal in their life. Without such men India would be an uglier and less happy place to live in than it is. But nonetheless anyone who relies on an attempt to turn the members of the caste-Hindus into better men by improving their personal character is in my judgement wasting his energy and hugging an illusion. . . . As a matter of fact, a Hindu does treat all those who are not of his Caste as though they were aliens, who could be discriminated against with impunity and against whom any fraud or trick may be practiced without shame. *This is to say that there can be a better or a worse Hindu. But a good Hindu cannot be.* This is so not because there is anything wrong with his personal character. In fact what is wrong is the entire basis of his relationship to his fellows. The best of men cannot be moral if the basis of relationship between them and their

fellows is fundamentally a wrong relationship. To a slave his master may be better or worse. But there cannot be a good master. . . .

Does the Mahatma practice what he preaches? . . . The Mahatma is a Bania by birth. His ancestors had abandoned trading in favour of ministership, which is a calling of the Brahmins. In his own life, before he became a Mahatma, when [the] occasion came for him to choose his career he preferred law to [a merchant's] scales. On abandoning law, he became half saint and half politician. He has never touched trading, which is his ancestral calling. His youngest son—I take one who is a faithful follower of his father—born a Vaishya, has married a Brahmin's daughter, and has chosen to serve a newspaper magnate. The Mahatma is not known to have condemned him for not following his ancestral calling. . . .

Why does the Mahatma cling to the theory of everyone following his or her ancestral calling? He gives his reasons nowhere. But there must be some reason, although he does not care to avow it. Years ago, writing on “Caste *versus* Class” in his *Young India*, he argued that Caste System was better than Class System on the ground that Caste was the best possible adjustment of social stability. If that be the reason why the Mahatma clings to the theory of everyone following his or her ancestral calling, then he is clinging to a false view of social life. . . .

Some might think that the Mahatma has made much progress, inasmuch as he now only believes in *Varna* and does not believe in Caste. It is true that there was a time when the Mahatma was a full-blooded and a blue-blooded Sanatani Hindu. He believed in the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the *Puranas*, and all that goes by the name of Hindu scriptures; and therefore, in *avatars* and rebirth. He believed in Caste, and defended it with the vigour of the orthodox. He condemned the cry for inter-dining, inter-drinking, and inter-marrying, and argued that restraints about inter-dining to a great extent “helped the cultivation of will-power and the conservation of a certain social virtue.” It is good that he has repudiated this sanctimonious nonsense and admitted that caste “is harmful both to spiritual and national growth,” and maybe his son's marriage outside his caste has had something to do with this change of view. But has the Mahatma really progressed? . . . What is the difference between Caste and *Varna*, as understood by the Mahatma? I find none. As defined by the Mahatma, *Varna* becomes merely a different name for Caste, for the simple reason that it is the same in essence—namely, pursuit of [one's] ancestral calling. . . . I am sure that all his confusion is due to the fact that the Mahatma has no definite and clear conception as to what is *Varna* and what is Caste, and as to the necessity of either for the conservation of Hinduism. He has said—and one hopes that he will not find some mystic reason to change his view—that Caste is not the essence of Hinduism. Does he regard *Varna* as the essence of Hinduism? One cannot as yet give any categorical answer. . . .

The real reason why the Mahatma is suffering from this confusion is probably to be traced to two sources. The first is the temperament of the Mahatma.

He has in almost everything the simplicity of a child, with the child's capacity for self-deception. Like a child, he can believe in anything he wants to believe. We must therefore wait till such time as it pleases the Mahatma to abandon his faith in *Varna*, as it has pleased him to abandon his faith in Caste. The second source of confusion is the double role which the Mahatma wants to play—of a Mahatma and a politician. As a Mahatma, he may be trying to spiritualize politics. Whether he has succeeded in it or not, politics have certainly commercialized him. A politician must know that Society cannot bear the whole truth, and that he must not speak the whole truth; if he is speaking the whole truth it is bad for his politics. The reason why the Mahatma is always supporting Caste and *Varna* is because he is afraid that if he opposed them he will lose his place in politics. . . .

The Mahatma appears not to believe in thinking. He prefers to follow the saints. Like a conservative with his reverence for consecrated notions, he is afraid that if he once starts thinking, many ideals and institutions to which he clings will be doomed. One must sympathize with him. For every act of independent thinking puts some portion of an apparently stable world in peril. But it is equally true that dependence on saints cannot lead us to know the truth. The saints are after all only human beings, and as Lord Balfour said, "the human mind is no more a truth finding apparatus than the snout of a pig."³³ Insofar as he [the Mahatma] does think, to me he really appears to be prostituting his intelligence to find reasons for supporting this archaic social structure of the Hindus. He is the most influential apologist of it, and therefore the worst enemy of the Hindus.

[Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, *Writings and Speeches*, 20 vols. (Bombay: Education Department, Government of Maharashtra, 1979), 1:86–93, 95.]

MOHANDAS GANDHI: RESPONSES TO DR. AMBEDKAR'S INDICTMENT

Gandhi's two-part reply to Ambedkar appears in his publication *Harijan*, for July 11 and 18, 1936.

The readers will recall the fact that Dr. Ambedkar was to have presided last May at the annual conference of the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal of Lahore. But the conference itself was cancelled because Dr. Ambedkar's address was found by the Reception Committee to be unacceptable. How far a Reception Committee is justified in rejecting a President of its choice because of his address that may be objectionable to it is open to question. The Committee knew Dr. Ambedkar's views on caste and the Hindu scriptures. They knew also that he had in unequivocal terms decided to give up Hinduism. Nothing less than the address that Dr. Ambedkar had prepared was to be expected from him. The committee appears to have deprived the public of an opportunity of listening to the original views of a man who has carved out for himself a unique position in society. Whatever

label he wears in future, Dr. Ambedkar is not the man to allow himself to be forgotten.

Dr. Ambedkar was not going to be beaten by the Reception Committee. He has answered their rejection of him by publishing the address at his own expense. He has priced it at 8 annas. I would suggest a reduction to 2 annas or at least 4 annas.

No reformer can ignore the address. The orthodox will gain by reading it. This is not to say that the address is not open to objection. It has to be read if only because it is open to serious objection. Dr. Ambedkar is a challenge to Hinduism. Brought up as a Hindu, educated by a Hindu potentate, he has become so disgusted with the so-called *savarna* Hindus for the treatment that he and his have received at their hands that he proposes to leave not only them but the very religion that is his and their common heritage. He has transferred to that religion his disgust against a part of its professors.

But this is not to be wondered at. After all one can only judge a system or an institution by the conduct of its representatives. What is more, Dr. Ambedkar found that the vast majority of Savarna Hindus had not only conducted themselves inhumanly against those of their fellow religionists whom they classed as untouchables, but they had based their conduct on the authority of their scriptures, and when he began to search them he had found ample warrant for their belief in untouchability and its implications. The author of the address has quoted chapter and verse in proof of his threefold indictment—inhuman conduct itself, the unabashed justification for it on the part of the perpetrators and the subsequent discovery that the justification was warranted by their scriptures.

No Hindu who prizes his faith above life itself can afford to underrate the importance of this indictment. Dr. Ambedkar is not alone in his disgust. He is its most uncompromising exponent and one of the ablest among them. He is certainly the most irreconcilable among them. Thank God, in the front rank of the leaders, he is singularly alone and as yet but a representative of a very small minority. But what he says is voiced with more or less vehemence by many leaders belonging to the depressed classes. Only the latter, for instance Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah and Dewan Bahadur Srinivasan, not only do not threaten to give up Hinduism but find enough warmth in it to compensate for the shameful persecution to which the vast mass of Harijans are exposed.

But the fact of many leaders remaining in the Hindu fold is no warrant to disregarding what Dr. Ambedkar has to say. The Savarnas have to correct their belief and their conduct. Above all those who are by their learning and influence among the Savarnas have to give an authoritative interpretation of the scriptures. The questions that Dr. Ambedkar's indictment suggests are:

1. What are the scriptures?
2. Are all the printed texts to be regarded as an integral part of them or is any part of them to be rejected as unauthorized interpolations?

3. What is the answer of such accepted and expurgated scriptures on the question of untouchability, caste, equality of status, interdining and intermarriages? (These have been all ably examined by Dr. Ambedkar in his address.)

I must reserve for the next issue my own answer to these questions and a statement of the (at least some) manifest flaws in Dr. Ambedkar's thesis.

[CWMG 63:134–136.]

Many of the texts that Dr. Ambedkar quotes from the Smritis cannot be accepted as authentic. The scriptures properly so called can only be concerned with eternal verities and must appeal to any conscience, i.e. any heart whose eyes of understanding are opened. Nothing can be accepted as the word of God which cannot be tested by reason or be capable of being spiritually experienced. And even when you have an expurgated edition of the scriptures, you will need their interpretation. Who is the best interpreter? Not learned men surely. Learning there must be. But religion does not live by it. It lives in the experiences of its saints and seers, in their lives and sayings. When all the most learned commentators of scriptures are utterly forgotten, the accumulated experience of the sages and saints will abide and be an inspiration for ages to come.

Caste has nothing to do with religion. It is a custom whose origin I do not know and do not need to know for the satisfaction of my spiritual hunger. But I do know that it is harmful both to spiritual and national growth. *Varna* and *Ashrama* are institutions which have nothing to do with castes. The law of *Varna* teaches us that we have each one of us to earn our bread by following the ancestral calling. It defines not our rights but our duties. It necessarily has reference to callings that are conducive to the welfare of humanity and to no other. It also follows that there is no calling too low and none too high. All are good, lawful, and absolutely equal in status. The callings of a Brahmin—spiritual teacher—and a scavenger are equal, and their due performance carries equal merit before God and at one time seems to have carried identical reward before man. Both were entitled to their livelihood and no more. . . . Arrogation of a superior status by any of the *varnas* over another is a denial of the law. And there is nothing in the law of *varna* to warrant a belief in untouchability. (The essence of Hinduism is contained in its enunciation of one and only God as Truth and its bold acceptance of ahimsa as the law of the human family.)

I am aware that my interpretation of Hinduism will be disputed by many besides Dr. Ambedkar. That does not affect my position. It is an interpretation by which I have lived for nearly half a century and according to which I have endeavoured to the best of my ability to regulate my life.

In my opinion the profound mistake that Dr. Ambedkar has made in his address is to pick out the texts of doubtful authenticity and value and the state of degraded Hindus who are no fit specimens of the faith they so woefully misrepresent. Judged by the standard applied by Dr. Ambedkar, every known living faith will probably fail.

In his able address, the learned Doctor has over-proved his case. Can a religion that was professed by Chaitanya, Jnanadeva, Tukaram, Tiruvalluvar, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Maharishi Devendranath Tagore, Vivekanand and a host of others who might be easily mentioned, be so utterly devoid of merit as is made out in Dr. Ambedkar's address? A religion has to be judged not by its worst specimens but by the best it might have produced. For that and that alone can be used as the standard to aspire to, if not to improve upon.

[CWMG 63:153–154.]

PERIYAR RESPONDS TO GANDHI ON CASTE

Sometimes referred to as EVR, but more often as Periyar ("Great Man"), E. V. Ramasami (1879–1973) was born into an affluent orthodox Hindu family of Erode, Tamil Nadu. Like Gandhi, his early education, travels, and independent spirit led him to criticize Hinduism, especially the institution of Untouchability, and he soon devoted his life to social and political reform. As an advocate of social equality, he moved quickly from leadership in local politics to a strong commitment to the Indian National Congress, where he showed a Gandhian flair for involving the masses. He championed the Non-cooperation Movement in 1920, sharing all of its goals, including its loyalty to Gandhi's leadership. By 1922, though, as this phase of the freedom struggle ended, the first signs of his disenchantment with the Congress appeared. Focusing on his primary concern of caste reform, he clashed sharply with Brahman Congress leadership in Madras; but soon his opposition to them was augmented by his disillusionment with Gandhi. As Ambedkar also discovered, at this time Gandhi was not ready to oppose unequivocally all the caste institutions of Hinduism. Periyar quickly became a genuine radical in this respect. His sweeping social critique took him even further than Ambedkar, since he attacked not only Gandhi, the Brahmanical caste system, and Hinduism, but all religion. His special ire was reserved for people of his own, Hindu background; he seems not to have targeted Islam or Christianity, but he criticized the *Rāmāyana* and the *Laws of Manu* for their oppressive stances toward non-Brahmans and non-elites.

In 1925 Periyar started his own "Self-Respect Movement." This led him, like Gandhi, to imprisonment for his resistance to unjust laws, but Periyar concentrated on the injustice of the Brahmanical social system rather than that of British rule. Gandhi, Ambedkar, and Periyar were all three prominent critics of caste, but the last was the most extreme, as well as the only one among them who led an anti-Brahman effort, known as the Dravidian movement, in the heart of the conservative south of Tamil Nadu. When he left Congress, Periyar expressed his creed and policy in heretical terms: "No god; no religion; no Gandhi; no Congress; and no Brahmins."³⁴ Among our responders to Gandhi, this decree might have been shared completely only by M. N. Roy, because even Ambedkar had his religion, and accommodated Congress.

After years of service in state and national politics, and nearly two decades of involvement in the social reformist Justice Party, in 1939 Periyar demanded an independent

Dravida Nadu, which would be free from the domination of Brahmans, caste hierarchy, and Hindi-language imposition. In 1944 he changed the name of his party to Dravida Kazhagam, and in 1948 this split to give rise to the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK). Largely because of agitation spearheaded by his party, the compulsory learning of Hindi was abolished in 1948, and the separate state of Tamil Nadu was carved out of the Union in 1956.

In an incisive comparative analysis of the ideas of Periyar, Ambedkar, and Gandhi, Nicholas B. Dirks makes it clear that although all three critics of caste recognized its profound roots in traditional India, and strongly opposed the tyranny of social hierarchy, Gandhi's persistent defense of *varnashrama dharma* was intolerable to the other two. This was the tipping point, or the test that Gandhi failed. With the same logic and language that led Gandhi, the caste reformer, to defend and embrace the inclusive spirit of Hinduism, both Periyar and Ambedkar deemed Hinduism hopeless, incapable of eradicating its worst evil. Both were "obsessed," as Dirks observes,³⁵ with Gandhi's dominant role in the whole project of Indian nationalism. They came to view him as ingenuous or misguided, and moved off in a different direction. From their perspective, Gandhi argued that "caste must go," but then offered up, as a sop to hierarchical Hinduism, a perverse interpretation of *varnashrama dharma*. Far better than this, in their view, would be a democracy, free of all vestiges of caste and Untouchability.

The excerpts from Periyar below show that his definition of both India's damnation and its hope for future redemption revolved around principles of equality and justice, always tested in the context of caste and Brahmanism.

ON HOW GANDHI'S PROGRAM INITIALLY DIFFERED FROM THOSE OF OTHER CONGRESS LEADERS

Although initially a Gandhi supporter and member of the Tamilnadu Congress Party Committee, in the mid-1920s Periyar broke with both over the issue of guaranteed reservations for low- or out-caste people in a putative free India. The first two selections show his change in attitude between 1926 and 1927.

Some people ask me why I continue to stay in the Congress. I do so only because of the desire to reconvert the Congress that [presently] works for Brahmin career opportunities into the organization that existed prior to the past couple of years, the Mahatma Gandhi Congress. This worked for the welfare of everyone, and is therefore the real Congress of Non-cooperation. If such a reconversion occurs, then the selfish leaders of today will disappear. When one listens to Gandhi's words sometimes the precarious hope remains that such a restoration is still possible. If the hope completely disappears I will leave Congress.

[*Kudi Arasu*, 8 August 1926, 22; page numbers here and below refer to S. V. Rajadhurai and V. Geetha, *Periyar: Suyamariyathai Samatharmam* (Coimbatore: Vidyal Pathipagam, 1999), trans. Rajan Krishnan and slightly emended for English by R. F. McDermott.]

*ON GANDHI'S LUNACY OR STRATEGY TO BUILD
CONSENSUS AT THE COST OF COMPROMISING
HIS COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL REFORM*

Periyar, like many other critics, faulted Gandhi for his sacrifice of political to religious principles.

Giving up his own basic principles for the sake of consensus and unity, Mahatma withdrew himself into his ashram like an ascetic or a Sankaracharya. It led to a situation that resembled a religious Mutt [ashrama] where rituals are regularly performed and devotees go to sing the praise of the saint and are rewarded with fame and glory. The reason why Gandhi's principles came to be undervalued and the Gandhi Mutt was established is because of the lunacy of seeking consensus and unity at the cost of principles. Since lunacy is a mark of a saint, it might suit Mahatma Gandhi. He could still return to his original principles but now that seems unlikely. I am certain that any institution, individual or country divorced from its core principles can only go astray, and Gandhi has lost sight of his.

[*Kudi Arasu*, 12 June 1927, 23.]

ON GANDHI'S APOTHEOSIS AND ASSASSINATION

Late in life, when asked to ruminate on Gandhi's legacy, Periyar made the following observations.

Why did the Brahmins make Gandhi Mahatma?

Comrade Gandhi proclaimed: 1) I am a conservative Hindu; 2) I believe in the prescriptions of the Vedas and the Epics; 3) I believe in the various incarnations of God; 4) I believe in the Varnashrama Dharma as laid down in the Vedic texts; 5) I believe in worshipping these idols. He also acted in accordance with these beliefs. Therefore, he was made a Mahatma.

Why did the Brahmins assassinate him?

He came to say that: 1) I don't believe that something like the traditional concept of God exists; 2) There is no truth exclusive to Hinduism; 3) Both Allah and Ram are the same; 4) It is not the privilege of only Brahmins to be educated; 5) I value the Koran as much as I value the Vedas; 6) The mosques seized by force should be vacated and returned to Muslims. Therefore, he was killed.

[*Viduthalai*, 12 April 1951, 735.]

SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE: FERVENT NATIONALIST AND SOCIALIST

Subhas Chandra Bose (1897–1945), Indian political leader and head of a provisional government of free India during World War II, worked in the Indian National Congress for two decades before the war, but was impatient with Gandhi's non-violence and leadership. Bose was born in Cuttack, Orissa, a high-caste Bengali of the Kayastha caste.

He grew up during the Swadeshi period in Bengal, and his heroes were Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo Ghose. Expelled from Presidency College for his role in assaulting a British professor who he thought had insulted India, Bose graduated later from another college with high honors.

His father sent him to England to take the Indian Civil Service examination, which he passed with brilliant marks. But since Bose felt that the Raj represented slavery for India, he decided not to accept an appointment into the elite service of the Raj. He met Gandhi upon his return from England, and although he was not completely satisfied with Gandhi's approach, he joined the Congress movement nonetheless.

In Calcutta, Bose worked in the Congress; as a favored lieutenant of C. R. Das, he was chosen Chief Executive Officer of the Calcutta Corporation in 1924. He worked for Hindu–Muslim amity and the improvement of civic life, but was jailed for involvement with acts of violence against the British Raj. No formal charges were made, but Bose served about three years in jail, two of them under unpleasant circumstances in Mandalay, Burma. Released for health reasons in 1927, and with Das now dead, Bose quickly rose to the leadership of the Bengal Provincial Congress. In 1928 he was chosen as a general secretary of the Indian National Congress, helped to prepare the Nehru Report on Indian self-rule, and became a widely popular leader of the younger leftists. He had strong support from urban workers, middle-class nationalists in Calcutta and towns through the countryside, women, and students. Bose pressed Gandhi to move more quickly and forcefully for complete independence. He began to call himself a socialist, and advocated a socialist program for the reconstruction of India once independence was gained.

As commander of the Congress volunteers at the 1928 Congress session, he drilled young Indians to help control the meeting. Some of these Indians later formed an underground revolutionary group, the Bengal Volunteers, or BV, which carried out acts of violence. Bose's ties to this group, along with his mass following as a Congress leader, made him a marked man to officials in the Raj and untrustworthy to Gandhi.

Bose was in and out of jail from 1930 to 1933, and was even elected mayor of Calcutta in 1930 while imprisoned. He spent a good deal of the period from 1933 to 1937 in Europe recovering his health. While in Europe he wrote *The Indian Struggle*, an account of Indian politics from 1920 to 1934, and *An Indian Pilgrim*, a brief, insightful autobiography. Based in Vienna, he also did propaganda work for Indian nationalism

and visited many countries of Europe, including Italy and Ireland, where he was warmly welcomed. Bose was impressed at how both communism and fascism were pushing their societies rapidly into the modern world. But he was neither a fascist nor a communist. Closer to the ideal for India, he thought, was the modernizing dictatorship of Turkey's Mustapha Kemal Pasha, lauded as Atatürk ("Father of the Turks").

Bose's career both paralleled and rivaled that of his older contemporary Jawaharlal Nehru. The younger Nehru formed a close tie to Gandhi, which Bose never did. Both Subhas and Jawaharlal agitated for Congress to adopt the goal of complete independence (as opposed to dominion status) in the late 1920s; both were interested in spreading socialist ideas and in bringing the youth of the country into the nationalist movement; and both suffered numerous imprisonments for their active roles in that movement.

In 1938, with Gandhi's contingent blessing but not his complete confidence, Bose became president of the Indian National Congress. He took the initiative in forming the Planning Committee of the Congress. The next year he decided to run again, against Gandhi's wishes. With the support of the left, and strong support in some provinces outside his native Bengal, he defeated Gandhi's candidate, P. Sitaramayya, but then felt compelled to resign his presidency after a Gandhi-inspired controversy about the selection of the Working Committee, the executive body of the Congress. Bose formed the Forward Bloc, a group within the Congress pressing for immediate direct action against the Raj.

Imprisoned again in 1940, Bose fasted, and was released in December. With World War II under way, convinced that the British would never leave India peacefully, Bose determined to flee India and work with some foreign power hostile to the British. He hoped to recruit and train a military unit which would combine with forces within India to drive the British out by violent means. On January 17, 1941, he slipped out of his Calcutta house, reached the Indian frontier, and walked into Afghanistan. Receiving Italian, German, and Russian help, he traveled to Berlin as Orlando Mazzotta, where he set up the Free India Center, a propaganda operation, and the Indian Legion, a small fighting force recruited from Indian prisoners taken in North Africa. Unhappy in Europe, Bose was finally allowed by Hitler to leave for Southeast Asia in February 1943. Traveling by German and then Japanese submarines, and next by air, he reached Tokyo in spring 1943. He courted and impressed Prime Minister Tojo, who supported his efforts to reconstitute the Indian National Army (INA) and set up the Provisional Government of Azad Hind, or Free India. Bose's army was constituted mainly from Indian prisoners taken at Singapore and was supported by the Indian Independence League, a nationalist organization backed by the Indian community of Southeast Asia. Beloved by his followers, he was called Netaji ("Revered Leader"). He also recruited a regiment of women that he named after the Rani of Jhansi (who is discussed in chapter 2), and placed it under the command of Lakshmi Swaminathan; the women were trained to fight, but never entered combat. Bose worked diligently for communal harmony between Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs within his army, and continued his broadcasts back to India, which he had begun in Germany.

In an endeavor to fulfill his slogan of “Chalo Delhi,” or “On to Delhi,” Bose induced the Japanese to invade eastern India in 1944. Their forces briefly entered India, but this effort ended in a catastrophic defeat for the Japanese and the INA. Bose fled and was fatally burned in a plane crash in Taiwan in August 1945. In late 1945 the Raj put three officers of the INA on trial for participating in a rebellion against the king-emperor. The Sikh, G. S. Dhillon, the Hindu, Prem Sahgal, and the Muslim, Shah Nawaz Khan, were convicted, sentenced to transportation for life, but then released. The nationwide demonstrations against the trial of these three, who were seen as patriots by nationalists of all persuasions, showed the British to be out of touch with the political force of Indian nationalism.

For several decades the myth of Bose’s imminent return was spread among Indians who hoped that he would emerge to help India combat its many problems. Bose was one of those Indian nationalists who believed that violence in a noble cause would not corrupt the end sought.

THE ROLE OF MAHATMA GANDHI IN INDIAN HISTORY

The comments that follow come from chapter 16 of Bose’s *The Indian Struggle*, originally written in 1933 and then revised and extended in 1942.

The role which a man plays in history depends partly on his physical and mental equipment, and partly on the environment and the needs of times in which he is born. There is something in Mahatma Gandhi, which appeals to the mass of the Indian people. Born in another country he might have been a complete misfit. What, for instance, would he have done in a country like Russia or Germany or Italy? His doctrine of non-violence would have led him to the cross or to the mental hospital. In India it is different. His simple life, his vegetarian diet, his goat’s milk, his day of silence every week, his habit of squatting on the floor instead of sitting on a chair, his loin-cloth—in fact everything connected with him—has marked him out as one of the eccentric Mahatmas of old and has brought him nearer to his people. Wherever he may go, even the poorest of the poor feels that he is a product of the Indian soil—bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh. When the Mahatma speaks, he does so in a language that they comprehend, not in the language of Herbert Spencer and Edmund Burke, as for instance Sir Surendra Nath Banerji would have done, but in that of the *Bhagavad-Gita* and the *Ramayana*. When he talks to them about Swaraj, he does not dilate on the virtues of provincial autonomy or federation, he reminds them of the glories of *Ramarajya* (the kingdom of King Rama of old) and they understand. And when he talks of conquering through love and ahimsa (non-violence), they are reminded of Buddha and Mahavira and they accept him.

But the conformity of the Mahatma's physical and mental equipment to the traditions and temperament of the Indian people is but one factor accounting for the former's success. If he had been born in another epoch in Indian history, he might not have been able to distinguish himself so well. For instance, what would he have done at the time of the Revolution of 1857 when the people had arms, were able to fight and wanted a leader who could lead them in battle? The success of the Mahatma has been due to the failure of constitutionalism on the one side and armed revolution on the other. Since the eighties of the last century, the best political brains among the Indian people were engaged in a constitutional fight, in which the qualities most essential were skill in debate and eloquence in speech. In such an environment it is unlikely that the Mahatma would have attained much eminence. With the dawn of the present century people began to lose faith in constitutional methods. New weapons like *Swadeshi* (revival of national industry) and Boycott appeared, and simultaneously the revolutionary movement was born. As the years rolled by, the revolutionary movement began to gain ground (especially in Upper India) and during the Great War there was an attempt at a revolution. The failure of this attempt at a time when Britain had her hands full and the tragic events of 1919 convinced the Indian people that it was no use trying to resort to the method of physical force. The superior equipment of Britain would easily smash any such attempt and in its wake there would come indescribable misery and humiliation.

In 1920 India stood at the cross-roads. Constitutionalism was dead; armed revolution was sheer madness. But silent acquiescence was impossible. The country was groping for a new method and looking for a new leader. Then there sprang up India's man of destiny—Mahatma Gandhi—who had been biding his time all these years and quietly preparing himself for the great task ahead of him. He knew himself—he knew his country's needs and he knew also that during the next phase of India's struggle, the crown of leadership would be on his head. No false sense of modesty troubled him—he spoke with a firm voice and the people obeyed.

The Indian National Congress of today is largely his creation. The Congress Constitution is his handwork. From a talking body he has converted the Congress into a living and fighting organisation. It has its ramification in every town and village in India, and the entire nation has been trained to listen to one voice. Nobility of character and capacity to suffer have been made the essential tests of leadership, and the Congress is today the largest and the most representative political organisation in the country.

But how could he achieve so much within this short period? By his single-hearted devotion, his relentless will and his indefatigable labour. Moreover, the time was auspicious and his policy prudent. Though he appeared as a dynamic force, he was not too revolutionary for the majority of his countrymen. If he had been so, he would have frightened them, instead of inspiring them; repelled them, instead of drawing them. His policy was one of unification. He wanted to

unite Hindu and Moslem; the high caste and the low caste; the capitalist and the labourer; the landlord and the peasant. By this humanitarian outlook and his freedom from hatred, he was able to rouse sympathy even in his enemy's camp.

But Swaraj is still a distant dream. Instead of one, the people have waited for fourteen long years. And they will have to wait many more. With such purity of character and with such an unprecedented following, why has the Mahatma failed to liberate India?

He has failed because the strength of a leader depends not on the largeness—but on the character—of one's following. With a much smaller following, other leaders have been able to liberate their country—while the Mahatma with a much larger following has not. He has failed, because while he has understood the character of his own people, he has not understood the character of his opponents. The logic of the Mahatma is not the logic which appeals to John Bull. He has failed, because his policy of putting all his cards on the table will not do. We have to render unto Caesar what is Caesar's—and in a political fight the art of diplomacy cannot be dispensed with. He has failed, because he has not made use of the international weapon. If we desire to win our freedom through non-violence, diplomacy and international propaganda are essential. He has failed, because the false unity of interests that are inherently opposed is not a source of strength but a source of weakness in political warfare. The future of India rests exclusively with those radical and militant forces that will be able to undergo the sacrifice and suffering necessary for winning freedom. Last but not least, the Mahatma has failed, because he had to play a dual role in one person—the role of the leader of an enslaved people and that of a world-teacher, who has a new doctrine to preach. It is this duality which has made him at once the irreconcilable foe of the Englishman, according to Mr. Winston Churchill, and the best policeman of the Englishman according to Miss Ellen Wilkinson. . . .³⁶

In spite of the unparalleled popularity and reputation which the Mahatma has among his countrymen and will continue to have regardless of his future political career, there is no doubt that the unique position of the Mahatma is due to his political leadership. The Mahatma himself distinguishes between his mass-popularity and his political following and he is never content with having merely the former. Whether he will be able to retain that political following in the years to come, in the event of the British attitude being as unbending as it is today, will depend on his ability to evolve a more radical policy. Will he be able to give up the attempt to unite all the elements in the country and boldly identify himself with the more radical forces? In that case nobody can possibly supplant him. The hero of the present phase of the Indian struggle will then be the hero of the next phase as well.

[Subhas Chandra Bose, "The Role of Mahatma Gandhi in Indian History," from *The Indian Struggle, 1920–1942*, reproduced in *Netaji Collected Works*, 11 vols. (Calcutta: Netaji Research Bureau, 1981), 2:327–331.]

*ADDRESS TO MAHATMA GANDHI OVER THE
RANGOON RADIO ON JULY 6, 1944*

Mahatmaji,

Now that your health has somewhat improved, and you are able to attend to public business to some extent, I am taking the liberty of addressing a few words to you with a view to acquainting you with the plans and the activities of patriotic Indians outside India.

Before I do so I would like to inform you of the feelings of deep anxiety which Indians throughout the world had for several days after your sudden release from custody on grounds of ill-health. After the sad demise of Shrimati Kasturbaiji in British custody it was but natural for your countrymen to be alarmed over the state of your health. It has, however, pleased Providence to restore you to comparative health, so that three hundred and eighty-eight millions of your countrymen may still have the benefit of your guidance and advice.

I should like to say something about the attitude of your countrymen outside India towards yourself. What I shall say in this connection is the bare truth and nothing but the truth.

There are Indians outside India, as also at home, who are convinced that Indian Independence will be won only through the historic method of struggle. These men and women honestly feel that the British Government will never surrender to persuasion or moral pressure or non-violent resistance. . . .

From my experience of the British Government while I was inside India—from the secret information that I have gathered about Britain's policy while outside India—and from what I have seen regarding Britain's aims and intentions throughout the world, I am honestly convinced that the British Government will never recognise India's demand for Independence. Britain's one effort today is to exploit India to the fullest degree, in her endeavour to win this war. During the course of this war, Britain has lost one part of her territory to her enemies and another part to her friends. Even if the Allies could somehow win the war, it will be United States of America, and not Britain that will be top dog in future and it will mean that Britain will become a protegee of the U.S.A.

In such a situation the British will try to make good their present losses by exploiting India more ruthlessly than ever before. In order to do that, plans have been already hatched in London for crushing the nationalist movement in India once for all. It is because I know of these plans from secret but reliable sources that I feel it my duty to bring it to your notice. . . .

There is no Indian, whether at home or abroad, who would not be happy if India's freedom could be won through the method that you have advocated all your life and without shedding human blood. But things being what they are I am convinced that if we do desire freedom we must be prepared to wade through blood.

If circumstances had made it possible for us to organise an armed struggle inside India through our own efforts and resources that would have been the best course for us. But Mahatmaji, you know Indian conditions perhaps better than anybody else. So far as I am concerned, after twenty years' experience of public service in India, I came to the conclusion that it was impossible to organise an armed resistance in the country without some help from outside—help from our countrymen abroad, as well as from some foreign power or powers.

Prior to the outbreak of the present war, it was exceedingly difficult to get help from a foreign power, or even from Indians abroad. But the outbreak of the present war threw open the possibility of obtaining aid—both political and military—from the enemies of the British Empire. Before I could expect any help from them however I had first to find out what their attitude was towards India's demand for freedom. British propagandists, for a number of years, had been telling the world that the Axis Powers were the enemies of freedom and, therefore, of India's freedom. Was that a fact? I asked myself. Consequently, I had to leave India in order to find out the truth myself and as to whether the Axis Powers would be prepared to give us help and assistance in our fight for freedom.

Before I finally made up my mind to leave home and homeland, I had to decide whether it was right for me to take help from abroad. I had previously studied the history of revolutions all over the world, in order to discover the methods which had enabled other nations to obtain freedom. . . . In 1940 I read my history once again, and once again, I came to the conclusion that history did not furnish a single instance where freedom had been won without help of some sort from abroad. As for the moral question whether it was right to take help, I told myself that in public, as in private life, one can always take help as a loan and repay that loan later on. Moreover, if a powerful Empire like the British Empire, could go round the world with the begging bowl what objection could there be to an enslaved, disarmed people like ourselves taking help as a loan from abroad?

I can assure you, Mahatmaji, that before I finally decided to set out on a hazardous mission, I spent days, weeks and months in carefully considering the pros and cons of the case. After having served my people so long to the best of my ability, I could have no desire to be a traitor, or to give anyone a justification for calling me a traitor. . . .

By going abroad on a perilous quest, I was risking—not only my life and my whole future career—but what was more, the future of my party. If I had the slightest hope that without action from abroad we would win freedom, I would never have left India during a crisis. If I had any hope that within our life-time we would get another chance—another golden opportunity for winning freedom as during the present war, I doubt if I would have set out from home. But I was convinced of two things: firstly that such a golden opportunity would not come within another century—and secondly, that without action from abroad we would not be able to win freedom, merely through our own efforts of home. That is why I resolved to take the plunge. . . .

Father of our nation! In this holy war for India's liberation we ask for your blessings and good wishes. Jai Hind.

[Sisir K. Bose and Sugata Bose, *The Essential Writings of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 300–303, 309.]

NATHURAM GODSE: GANDHI'S ASSASSIN

Nathuram Godse (1910–1949), though rarely discussed in histories of modern India, ranks among its significant figures, if only as the assassin of Gandhi and popularizer of the teachings of his own mentor, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, the inventor of “Hindutva.” As early as 1927, Savarkar had ridiculed the philosophy of non-violence, writing,

The exit from the Indian world of a powerful personality like Lokamanya Tilak [1920] ushered in the mad intoxication of Khilafat agitation conspiring with the cult of the Charka as a way to Swaraj in one year. It is to be won by the perverse doctrine of non-violence and truth. The Non-cooperation Movement for Swaraj based on these twin principles was a movement without power and was bound to destroy the power of the country. It is an illusion, a hallucination, not unlike the hurricane that sweeps over a land only to destroy it. It is a disease of insanity, an epidemic and megalomania.³⁷

As Ashis Nandy notes in his brilliant analysis,³⁸ Godse's life is filled with intriguing ironies or paradoxes: a militant member of the extremist right-wing Hindu Mahasabha, which vehemently opposed Muslim influence in India, his assassination of Gandhi in Delhi spared the lives of countless Muslims by effectively ending communal warfare in northern India, and certainly in its capital.³⁹ Although directly opposed to Gandhi on the principle and practice of non-violent action in politics, he remained from birth an orthodox Brahman who, like Gandhi, could strongly criticize Hinduism on fundamental issues such as caste, “maintain[ing] that all Hindus should be treated with equal status as to rights social and religious.” Again, in Gandhi's terms, he acted out of devotion to serve his people, as a patriot and even as a humanitarian. Their strong criticism of Hindu institutions even as devout Hindus, or their unqualified patriotism and firm opposition to partition, are not the only striking parallels between them. When Gandhi and Godse stood trial, in 1922 and 1948 respectively, they both not only pleaded guilty, without appeal for mercy, on the basis of moral principle and political necessity; they also demanded from their judges maximum penalties for their self-acknowledged offenses, assuming sole responsibility for their admittedly drastic actions. Both insisted on representing themselves and offered eloquent testimony in their defense. In their trial testimonies, as in their lives, they presented themselves as authentic and highly disciplined, literally celibate men of principle, selflessly determined to act on the creed each had thoughtfully adopted. They convey not random mindlessness but calculated, heroic pursuit of a cause.

Essential tenets nonetheless divided them: whatever concessions to tactical violence Gandhi may have made at various points in his life, he, unlike Godse, theorized and demonstrated the mass power of non-violent action, and never committed an act of violence. Godse, like his mentor Savarkar, was committed to national independence and deemed British rule “an unnatural yoke and unjustifiable[,] and any means to remove it from India’s neck are justifiable.”⁴⁰ These transparent differences over the use and ethos of violence, and the corresponding clash of interpretations over the relationship of means and ends, were central to their ideological disagreements. Godse claimed never to have disliked Gandhi as a person; but he did, without hesitation, shoot him to death. He and Gandhi revered the *Bhagavad Gītā*, but Godse found it a justification for political violence, holding Gandhi’s opposing interpretation of it in contempt. Godse vehemently attacked “the infatuation of Gandhiji for the Muslims and his incorrigible craving for Muslim leadership,”⁴¹ as also his consequent betrayal of “Hindustan,” but in his view these differences could only be resolved through murder, not dialogue. For Godse, universal religious freedom was a dire threat to India; for Gandhi, it was a pillar of swaraj, ensured by a creedal affirmation of satyagraha.

TRIAL SPEECH

Gopal Godse, younger brother of Nathuram and himself a convicted co-defendant who served fifteen years in prison, compiled and published in 1978 the latter’s trial speech with accompanying introductory comments and related documents. In the introduction, he found pride and consolation in Justice G. D. Khosla’s reflections on the trial. Khosla reported later that Nathuram’s trial speech so profoundly moved the courtroom’s large audience that he had no doubt that had they constituted a jury, the verdict would have been not guilty by an overwhelming majority. But Godse was sentenced to hang and the execution carried out.

I had never made a secret about the fact that I supported the ideology or the school which was opposed to that of Gandhiji. I firmly believed that the teachings of absolute “ahimsa” as advocated by Gandhiji would ultimately result in the emasculation of the Hindu Community and thus make the community incapable of resisting the aggression or inroads of other communities, especially the Muslims. To counteract this evil I resolved to enter public life and formed a group of persons who held like views. . . . It was not so much the Gandhian “ahimsa” teachings that were opposed to by me and my group, but Gandhiji while advocating the views always showed or evinced a bias for Muslims, prejudicial and detrimental to the Hindu Community and its interests. I have fully described my point of view hereafter in detail and have quoted numerous instances which unmistakably establish how Gandhiji became responsible for a number of calamities which the Hindu Community had to suffer and undergo. . . .

Born in a devotional Brahmin family, I instinctively came to revere Hindu religion, Hindu history and Hindu culture. I had been intensely proud of Hindudom as a whole. Nevertheless as I grew up I developed a tendency to free thinking unfettered by any superstitions allegiance to any "ism," political or religious. That is why I worked actively for the eradication of untouchability and the caste system based on birth alone. I publicly joined anti-caste movements and maintained that all Hindus should be treated with equal status as to rights social and religious, and should be high or low on their merit alone and not through the accident of birth in a particular caste or profession. I used publicly to take part in organised anti-caste dinners in which thousands of Hindus, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Chamars and Bhangis broke the caste rules and dined in the company of each other. . . .

We felt in our heart of hearts that time had come when we should bid good-bye to Veer Savarkar's lead and cease to consult him in our future policy and programme, nor should we confide to him our future plans.

Just after that followed the terrible outburst of Muslim fanaticism in the Punjab and other parts of India. The Congress Government began to persecute, prosecute, and shoot the Hindus themselves who dared to resist the Muslim forces in Bihar, Calcutta, Punjab and other places. Our worst fears seemed to be coming true; and yet how painful and disgraceful it was for us to find that the 15th of August 1947 [the day on which India received her independence from Britain] was celebrated with illumination and festivities, while the whole of Punjab was set by the Muslims in flames and Hindu blood ran rivers. The Hindu Mahasabhaitees of my persuasion decided to boycott the festivities and the Congressite Government and to launch a fighting programme to check Muslim onslaughts. . . .

While the Congress Government continued to be sheepishly under the thumb of Gandhiji and while Gandhiji could thrust his anti-Hindu fads on that Congressite Government by resorting to such a simple trick as threatening a fast, it was clear to me that any common front under such circumstances was bound to be another form of setting up Gandhiji's Dictatorship and consequently a betrayal of Hindudom. . . .

The first item was to organise a series of powerful though peaceful demonstrations against Gandhiji so as to make him feel the impact of organized Hindu discontent, and to create confusion and disorder by demonstrative protests, etc. in his obnoxious prayer-meetings through which he then carried out his anti-Hindu propaganda. . . .

Gandhiji . . . still lived in the hope of being the common leader both of the Hindus and Muslims and the more he was defeated, the more he indulged in encouraging the Muslims by extravagant methods. . . . He also went on conceding one undemocratic demand after another to the Muslim League in the vain hope of enlisting its support in the national struggle. . . .

Gandhiji continued to pursue the same policy of appeasement, my blood boiled, and I could not tolerate him any longer. I do not mean to use hard words

against Gandhiji personally nor do I wish to conceal my utter dissent from and disapproval of the very foundation of his policy and methods. Gandhiji in fact succeeded in doing what the British always wanted to do in pursuance of their policy of "Divide and Rule." He helped them in dividing India. . . .

The accumulating provocation of 32 years culminating in his last pro-Muslim fast at last goaded me to the conclusion that the existence of Gandhiji should be brought to an end immediately. . . .

Many people thought his policies were irrational but they had either to withdraw from the Congress or to place their intelligence at his feet to do what he liked with it. In a position of such absolute irresponsibility Gandhiji was guilty of blunder after blunder, failure after failure and disaster after disaster. No one single political victory can be claimed to his credit during 33 years of his political predominance. . . .

In my opinion S. C. Bose is the supreme hero and martyr of modern India. He kept alive and fostered the revolutionary mentality of the masses, advocating all honorable means, including the use of force when necessary for the liberation of India. Gandhiji and his crowd of self-seekers tried to destroy him. It is thus entirely incorrect to represent the Mahatma as the architect of Indian Independence. . . .

All his fasts were to coerce Hindus. . . .

Gandhiji's fast for the Hindu-Muslim Unity was announced on 13th January 1948, and then I lost nearly all my control on my feelings. . . .

There was no enmity between Gandhiji and myself on any personal grounds. To those who speak of Gandhiji's honest motive in supporting Pakistan, I have only to say that I had nothing but the purest interest of our nation at my heart in taking the extreme step against the person of Gandhiji, who was the most responsible and answerable person for the terrible event culminating in the creation of Pakistan. . . .

After handing over crores of Hindus to the mercy of the Muslims of Pakistan Gandhiji and his followers have been advising them not to leave Pakistan but continue to stay on. The Hindus thus were caught in the hands of Muslim authorities quite unawares and in such circumstances series of calamities followed one after the other. When I bring to my mind all these happenings my body simply feels a horror of burning fire, even now. . . .

I do not desire any mercy to be shown to me. I do not also wish that anyone on my behalf should beg for mercy towards me.

Several persons are arraigned along with me in this trial as conspirators. I have already said that in the act I did, I had no companions and I alone am solely responsible for my act. . . .

May the country properly known as Hindusthan be again united and be one, and may the people be taught to discard the defeatist mentality leading them to submit to the aggressors. This is my last wish and prayer to the Almighty.

[Nathuram Godse, *May It Please Your Honour* (Pune: Shri Gopal Godse, 1978),

36-37, 44-45, 52, 54, 55, 69, 73, 74, 75, 123, 136, 145, 147, 161, 163.]

NIRAD CHAUDHURI'S CRITIQUE OF GANDHI'S NON-VIOLENCE

Nirad C. Chaudhuri (1897–1999), a high-caste Bengali, was a leading Indian intellectual of the twentieth century, but one who was self-taught, a late bloomer, and a published author for the first time only in his fifties. He published an insightful article, “The ‘Martial Races’ of India,” in the early 1930s, and helped his friend Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay complete the Apu novels, which were later made into classic films by Satyajit Ray. Chaudhuri was hired by Sarat Chandra Bose as private secretary in the mid-1930s, partially because of his superb English. After World War II began, Chaudhuri gained a post at All-India Radio commenting on military affairs. He shifted from Calcutta to Delhi, where he lived for two decades.

After the war and Indian independence, Chaudhuri wrote his first and possibly best book, *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, published in 1951. He was now launched on his literary career, since he gained fame and some fortune both in Britain and India. Its dedication to the memory of the British Empire in India also brought him the ire of Indian patriots, as had some of his actions and words in Calcutta and later at All-India Radio. In the *Autobiography*, he scathingly depicted how Gandhi brought to the surface an older and rancorous nationalism that spread widely but generated hates and divisions in Indian society. Through these same pages he interwove a very useful account of Hindu–Muslim relations. He completed his picture of India under British rule by contrasting the England of his imagination (which he learned of through literature) with the behavior of Britishers in India. Finally he presented a pessimistic and cyclical theory of the death of cultures—Aryan, Muslim, European—in an Indian environment. It is a book of sweep and intelligence, vivid portraiture, and moral passion.

Chaudhuri worked as a translator for the French Embassy in New Delhi and continued writing, with *A Passage to England* (1960) and numerous essays. In 1970 Chaudhuri moved to Oxford and lived and wrote there for the remainder of his long life. His works in this period included *The Continent of Circe* (1965), a book about Robert Clive, a biography of the Sanskrit scholar Max Müller (1974), and numberless articles. Later in life, he completed the second volume of his autobiography, “*Thy Hand, Great Anarch!*” (1987). Highly opinionated, with a rich and vigorous English style, Chaudhuri feared no sacred cows: he attacked his fellow Hindus and most Indian leaders, reserving his most abusive feelings for those who, like himself, were what he called Anglicized. He thought, with Macaulay, that no Bengali would ever fight for his country, so he dismissed claims that the Indian National Army in World War II or the Mukti Bahini during the Bangladesh War of Independence ever fought.

THE OLD AND NEW MILITARISMS OF HINDU HISTORY

The piece excerpted below about violence and non-violence in Indian civilization is typical of Chaudhuri's views and style.

Every Hindu is divided against himself, and it would seem throughout his historical existence he has been. The human personality is indeed contradictory everywhere, but normally one set of traits can push their opposites into the background and become dominant. But with the Hindus the opposites almost neutralize one another, and the indecisive tug-of-war stultifies all their actions.

It is on account of the presence of such opposites that I have taken the Roman god Janus as the symbol of the Hindu character. But it does not present only two faces. It has a whole series of them, going in pairs. For this reason the Hindu personality might be called not even Janus Quadrifrons, but Janus Multifrons.

Among the large number of antithetical though connected traits which shape Hindu behaviour, I shall mention here, by way of example, only those which are influencing their politics, both domestic and foreign. These are the following: A sense of Hindu solidarity with an uncontrollable tendency towards disunity within the Hindu order; collective megalomania with self-abasement; extreme xenophobia with an abject xenolatry; authoritarianism with anarchic individualism; violence with non-violence; militarism with pacifism; possessiveness with carelessness about property owned; courage with cowardice; cleverness with stupidity.

I shall have to examine these contradictions when discussing Hindu national and international politics. Here, just to induce belief in the thesis of the dichotomy, I shall describe that contradiction which is least suspected and which gives a particular appositeness to the symbol of Janus. The current belief is that the Hindus are a peace-loving and non-violent people, and this belief has been fortified by Gandhism. In reality, however, few human communities have been more warlike and fond of bloodshed. I know this will not be believed, for Hindu militarism lies buried under a mound of mythical notions about their ahimsa, non-violence, as the Assyrian kingdom lay under mounds of sand until Layard began to unearth it. I cannot expose the whole of it, but I shall at least dig a few trenches to reveal the existence of a new Assyria.

About twenty-five words in an inscription of Asoka have succeeded in almost wholly suppressing the thousands in the rest of the epigraphy and the whole of Sanskrit literature which bear testimony to the incorrigible militarism of the Hindus. Their political history is made up of blood-stained pages. . . .

Between this unnecessary proclamation of non-violence in the third century B.C. and its reassertion, largely futile, in the twentieth century by Mahatma Gandhi, there is not *one word* of non-violence in the theory and practice of statecraft by the Hindus. Read all the inscriptions, and you will find that when

they are not bare records of gifts or genealogy, they are proclamations of the victories and the conquests of the kings concerned.

The martial boasting is found not only among the Hindu kings, but equally among the Buddhist: Harsha, Dharmapala, or Devapala, who were no less war-like than the Guptas. *Mudgagiri-samāvāsita-jayaskandhāvārāt*—from the camp of victory pitched at Monghyr, Dharmapala announced that his cavalry was raising the dust to the skies.

The whole of Sanskrit literature, from the epics down to the latest long poems, is full of accounts of battles and exultation over war and conquest. These were the business of Hindu kings. They were always praised for having *exterminated* all their enemies, and one uniform formula of glorification for them is that they raised universal lamentation among the wives of the enemy folks. All over Aryavarta there was a voice heard, wives weeping for their husbands and would not be comforted, because they were not. . . .

But the realistic Hindu practice of war had its idealistic theory, which was developed very early. Frightened by the militaristic violence and the proneness to bloodshed of their people, the ancient Hindu moralists tried to restrain and purify it by formulating a moral concept of war as a war of righteousness, or, as they called it, *Dharma Yuddha*. This theory, though religious in its complexion, was something like the chivalry of the middle ages. It was proclaimed as the duty of the warrior, the Kshatriya, that he should defend and succour the distressed. . . .

I am giving these facts only to lead to a consideration of the current situation in which Hindu militarism is a genuine and powerful force, influencing Indian foreign policy. It is all the more dangerous because it is unanalysed, unexposed, and insidious. No one is likely to understand the actions of the Hindu government of India in the international sphere during the last fifteen years without recognizing the existence of a strong under-current of militarism among the people of the country. In fact, it was only natural that the Hindu militarism, after remaining suppressed but smouldering during British rule, should, as soon as an opportunity for a voluntary and unfettered choice presented itself, reassert itself and strongly influence the attitude of the Hindus in their international relations, sweeping aside the temporary, artificial, and largely opportunistic profession of non-violence in politics. One significant fact about the new militarism should be specially noted: that today it is most assertive and irresponsible precisely in that class in Hindu society which was the least militaristic in the past and most devoted to non-violence, and this, not of the refurbished Gandhian kind, but traditional—namely, in the Hindus of the lower middle-class and trading castes of the Gangetic plain. They have now also become the sons of Moloch, in addition to being the sons of Mammon.

[Nirad Chaudhuri, *The Continent of Circe: Being an Essay on the Peoples of India* by Nirad C. Chaudhuri (London: Chatto and Windus, 1965), 97–100, 104–105.]

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN: FROM MARXIST TO GANDHIAN

Jayaprakash Narayan (1902–1979), India's most popular postindependence political figure next to Nehru, left the ruling Congress Party in 1948, then in 1954 abandoned politics altogether in favor of Gandhian “constructive work” (*sarvodaya*) at the village level. His urge to spur sweeping political reforms resurfaced in the mid-1970s, and he played a major role both in precipitating Indira Gandhi's “Emergency” of 1975 to 1977, and in leading the coalition that defeated her party in 1977. In 1979 the coalition broke apart, and soon thereafter Jayaprakash (or “JP,” as he was affectionately known), died of kidney and heart failure. His contributions to political thought won him a worldwide audience; even today they continue to influence those who seek to infuse the economic, social, and political life of the future with greater equality, justice, and respect for the individual and the local community.

Jayaprakash (“the light of victory”) Narayan was born in a village in eastern India now in the state of Bihar. His father, an official superintending the operation of irrigation canals, was required by his work to move from place to place. Probably for health reasons (his eldest son died of cholera and his eldest daughter succumbed to the plague), he left young Jayaprakash in his native village with the boy's step-grandmother while the rest of the family moved away. At six, Jayaprakash started his education in the village primary school. When he was nine, his father sent him to the Collegiate School at Patna, Bihar's major city. The shy and dutiful son worked diligently, and won a merit scholarship to Patna College at the age of sixteen. He had considered himself a political extremist from the age of fourteen; at nineteen, when Gandhi's non-cooperation movement arrived in Patna, Jayaprakash threw away his schoolbooks and prepared to join it. His father wanted him to continue studying, and had him enrolled in a newly founded nationalist school called the Bihar Vidyapith.

In the following year, 1922, Gandhi suspended the non-cooperation movement, and Jayaprakash was deeply disillusioned. In addition, he was finding his new school insufficiently equipped with the apparatus for experiments he needed to carry on his studies in the natural sciences. A friend wrote him from the University of Iowa, urging him to complete his higher education in the United States.

In 1924, at the University of Wisconsin, he discovered the writings of Marx, and was especially influenced by Marx's claim to have found the “inevitable” solution to the problem of poverty. Jayaprakash soon became a regular reader of M. N. Roy's *New Masses* magazine and the US Communist Party's *Daily Worker*. He switched from natural science to sociology, and from Wisconsin to Ohio State, where he took his BA in 1928 and MA in 1929. He wanted to go on for a PhD, but his mother was critically ill, and so he returned home.

At once he was drawn into the mainstream of nationalist politics: his wife took him to meet Gandhi; he met Nehru, the next Congress president, and the two became friends. Nehru invited him and his wife to live in Allahabad and help with the work of the Congress, and in 1932, when most other leaders of the Congress were in jail, he

served as its general secretary until he, too, was arrested, tried, and imprisoned. In 1934 he and other leftists founded a group within the Congress that they named the Congress Socialist Party; Jayaprakash became its chief organizer and traveled all over India to recruit and teach new members. From 1936 he encouraged the newly legalized communists to enroll as Congress socialists, but by 1940 he was fed up with their maneuvering for power and sudden changes in policy in obedience to dictates from the Soviet Union. At the same time he was impatient with the Congress under Gandhi's moderating influence—so much so that he courted and received two successive prison sentences from 1940 to 1942 for his fiery speeches urging factory workers to start a general strike, stop paying taxes, and set up their own police, courts, and government.

Jayaprakash became a national hero in 1942 when he and five other prisoners climbed over the seventeen-foot-high wall of their jail on the night of Diwali (the festival of lights) and escaped capture. Undetected, he visited the major cities of India to instruct guerrilla fighters and issue proclamations urging struggle against British rule. Within a year he was arrested at Lahore and subjected to prolonged torture in a vain attempt to make him talk about his activities. Although he was released only in 1946, a year after most of the Congress leaders, he remained determined to oust the British through a massive uprising of the people.

Thirteen years younger than Nehru, equally intellectual and even more idealistic, Jayaprakash could easily have become Nehru's right-hand man and ultimately his successor as India's prime minister. Yet he shared that part of Gandhi which could instinctively rebel against the official exercise of political power (he was never a candidate for public office). In 1948 he led his socialist followers out of the Congress, and from then on steadily lost interest in political activity. Instead, he gravitated toward Gandhian work at the village level, beginning with the Bhudan (land-gift) Movement begun by Gandhi's disciple Vinoba Bhave. In 1954 he founded his own ashram in a rural part of Bihar to try to apply Gandhi's methods of village economic improvement, and by the 1960s he was sending workers to train in Israel and Japan in order to adapt modern technology to villagers' needs.

Jayaprakash never ceased to reflect and speak on his ideals for India's future. At the core of his vision lay a blend of Marx's and Gandhi's dreams: unselfish and altruistic individuals living in self-supporting communities, undisturbed by either centralized government or exploitative capitalism. He repeatedly refused opportunities to serve in the government, but his restless nature moved him to try to solve or mediate problems in one area after another—Kashmir, Nagaland, and throughout his home state of Bihar. He played the role of gadfly to both state and central governments, and attracted huge crowds of youthful sympathizers when he called for an end to corruption, police terrorism, and the misuse of power. The size of these crowds, and his vague but catchy call for "total revolution" in 1975, provoked an extreme clampdown by Indira Gandhi and her government that left a scar on India's record as a liberal-democratic polity.

Jayaprakash's Gandhian ideals of *swaraj*, *satyagraha*, and *sarvodaya* remain for future generations to reexamine or reactivate in the spirit of social and political change.

A PLEA FOR A COMMUNITARIAN POLITY AND ECONOMY

In his longest piece of theoretical writing, entitled "A Plea for the Reconstruction of Indian Polity," Jayaprakash set forth in 1959 his plan for the radical decentralization of his country's government and economy. It draws heavily on Gandhi's dream for independent India, connecting individual freedom and social responsibility in a democracy that is here called communitarian.

I propose in this paper to describe the main outline of the polity which to my mind is not only most suited for us, but is also most rational and scientific. . . .

My search here has been for the forms of social life, particularly of political life, that would assure the preservation of human values about which there is hardly any dispute in the world today; and my approach has been non-partisan and non-sectarian. . . .

First of all, let it be pointed out that the problem of democracy is basically, and above all, a moral problem. Constitutions, systems of government, parties, elections—all these are relevant to the business of democracy. But unless the moral and spiritual qualities of the people are appropriate, the best of constitutions and political systems will not make democracy work. The moral qualities and mental attitudes most needed for democracy are: (1) concern for truth; (2) aversion to violence; (3) love of liberty and courage to resist oppression and tyranny; (4) spirit of co-operation; (5) preparedness to adjust self-interest to the larger interest; (6) respect for other's opinions and tolerance; (7) readiness to take responsibility; (8) belief in the fundamental equality of man; (9) faith in the educability of human nature.

These qualities and attitudes are not inborn in man. But he can be educated in them and trained to acquire and practise them. . . .

When there is liberty it leads to abuse and necessitates State interference, and when there is State interference it leads to curtailment of liberty. How then to preserve liberty and prevent its abuse? There are no political means by which the dilemma can be resolved, there are only moral means. The obverse side of the medal of liberty is responsibility. If the individual is not prepared to take social responsibility, if he uses liberty for self-aggrandisement and neglects or hurts the interests of others, some form of state-ism becomes inevitable. It is here that the pertinence and wisdom of Gandhiji's concept of trusteeship becomes evident. The only democratic answer to state-ism and totalitarianism is trusteeship. But trusteeship cannot be practised without voluntary limitation of wants. An individual cannot function as a trustee unless he is prepared to share his possessions with his fellowmen; this he cannot do unless he has learned to curtail his wants. Thus voluntary limitation of wants, in other words, the rejection of materialism or the unlimited pursuit of material satisfactions, is essential for the achievement and preservation of democracy. . . .

It should be remembered that democracy does not consist merely in its formal institutions. It lives really and truly in the life of the people; it is a way of life. It is not only through the representative assemblies and elected governments that democracy works, but in an equally true sense through the voluntary associations and actions of the citizens which they carry on and establish to deal with their problems, promote their interests and manage their affairs. . . .

Democracy is not merely a question of political rights and people's part in government. Particularly since the First World War, democracy has come to mean more and more social and economic justice, equal opportunity, industrial democracy. . . . This is not to suggest that democracy is bound up with any such politico-economic ideologies as socialism or communism. It is true that these ideologies had promised full democracy in the sense used above. But . . . if communism and socialism have failed so far to lead human society to these goals, the endeavour to reach them must continue to form part of the quest for democracy. It has been indicated above that the answer is moral rather than political or economic. . . .

A word that figures boldly on the ancient sign-post is *dharma*. Indian polity held that the State was subject to the *dharma*, which it was its duty to uphold and protect.

Unless life in India is again organised on the basis of self-determining and mutually coordinating and integrating communities, that organic self-regulation of society which the concept of *dharma* represented will not be possible. To that extent democracy will remain distantly removed from the life of the people. . . . [If] the village becomes a community . . . only then will it be possible for the village to adopt as its *dharma* the welfare of all the villagers, so that none goes without food, clothing, a roof over his head, work to do; no child goes without the benefit of a knowledge of the three R's; none goes without the benefit of a minimum health service. . . .

If man decided that instead of being herded together in large cities it was better to live in small communities, instead of being automatons it was better to be conscious human beings, instead of being a grain in the sand-heap it was better to be a member of a community, it should not be difficult for scientists to evolve the appropriate [small-scale industrial] technology.

Thus the society we are visualising here will be neither "urban" nor "rural," it will be, if a name has to be given to it, communitarian. In other words, it will truly be society. Development of science has made it possible for the distinction between urban and rural to be abolished. The communities of the future will have a balance of agriculture and industry; they will be agro-industrial; they will make full use of science and technology so as to serve the ends of their life and no more. Owing to geographical and historical conditions agriculture may predominate in one and industry in another, but a balance between them will be the ideal of all. The present monstrosities, the big cities, will have to be decentralised as far as possible to relieve congestion and create healthy conditions

of life; and for the rest, they will have to be so re-organised as to be made federations of smaller sized communities. To the extent this is not possible, the big cities will have to be endured, care being taken to see that they do not become bigger, and no new big cities come up. . . .

The next step in the building up of an integrated society is for a number of neighbouring primary communities to come together and cooperate amongst themselves to build, let us say, a regional community. . . . Thus the regional community comes into existence by an organic process of growth. The circle of community is widened. . . . The regional community, however, is not a superior or higher body that can control, or interfere with, the internal administration of the primary communities. Each in its sphere is equally sovereign.

The regional community in its turn will do all that is within its competence. But again, there will be many things which will be beyond its competence, such as running a techno-agricultural college, a major irrigation project, production of electricity, manufacture of machines, etc. In order that these tasks be tackled a number of regional communities will have to come together to form a still larger community—the district community, let us say. The district community too will be an integrated community and its relationship with the regional communities be of a pattern similar to that of the latter with the primary communities.

In this manner the district communities in their turn would federate together to form the provincial community. The provincial communities would come together to form the National Community. A day might come when the national communities might federate together to form the World Community. . . .

However, a treatment of the polity would be incomplete without a brief description of the economy that would underlie it. Society is a complex whole, as man himself is; and, therefore, social and human reconstruction requires an all-sided approach. . . .

The community is an enlarged family, and like the family it represents the eternal flow of life. Just as the family is interested not only in its present members but even in those who are unborn, so the community thinks of future generations. Its economy, therefore, is not wasteful. It is particularly careful about the non-renewable resources of nature which are being wasted at such a criminal rate by the so-called advanced nations of the world. A balanced economy concerned with future generations of men, that is, with life rather than death, would try to do its best to return to nature what it takes from it. It will, therefore, try to restrict consumption as far as possible to renewable resources and use as little as possible of the resources it cannot put back. The economy of the community is in co-operative harmony with nature, while present-day economy both of the West and East is at perpetual and destructive war with nature. . . .

The economic life of the communitarian society would be so organised that human needs are satisfied as near at home as possible: first, in the primary community, then in the regional, district, provincial, national and international community—in that ascending order. This means that each expanding area of community would be as self-sufficient as possible. Incidentally, this would save much of the unnecessary energy and time devoted today to the business of commerce, advertisement, etc. . . .

A word about private enterprise. Private enterprise, in the sense of *purushartha*, the individual's spirit of enterprise, would have fullest scope in the community. But in the community the individual would be imbued with the spirit of community. Therefore, private enterprise in a communitarian society would also partake of that spirit and work for private as well as communal good. Further, private enterprise would also be subject to the principles of self-government and responsibility to, and integration with, the community. . . .

The picture drawn here of the polity for India, and of social organization in general, might perhaps appear to be idealistic. If so, I would not consider that to be a disqualification. An ideal cannot but be idealistic. The question is if the ideal is impractical, unscientific or otherwise ill-conceived. I have tried in the preceding pages to show that all relevant considerations lead irresistibly towards it.

The achievement of this ideal would, however, be a colossal task. Thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of voluntary workers would be needed over a number of years to accomplish it. The Government should lend its full support; but it is necessary to remember that the main burden of the task would have to be borne by voluntary political and social workers and institutions. The heart of the problem is to create the "spirit of community," without which the whole body politic would be without life and soul. This is a task of moral regeneration to be brought about by example, service, sacrifice and love. Those who occupy high places in society—in politics, business, the professions—bear the heavy responsibility of leading the people by personal example.

The task also is one of social engineering, needing the help of the State; of scientists, experts, educationists, businessmen, experimenters; of men and women; of young and old.

It is a task of dedication; of creation; of self-discovery. It is a task that defines India's destiny. It spells a challenge to India's sons and daughters. Will they accept the challenge?

[From Jayaprakash Narayan, *Socialism, Sarvodaya, and Democracy*, ed. Bimla Prasad (New York: Asian Publishing House, 1964), 192–193, 196, 197–199, 206–207, 211–212, 213–214, 219, 220–221, 224, 238.]



India and Pakistan in 1947



Chapter 7

TO INDEPENDENCE AND PARTITION

The granting of independence to India and Pakistan by Great Britain in 1947 is the single most important defining event of twentieth-century South Asia. Although it is the crucial shaping moment, it is embedded in developments that had been under way for decades, and it has continued to affect events until today. One can look earlier or later at significant turning points, but 1947 can never be excluded as a point of reference. The event-makers in the final year(s) of British India knew how momentous their decisions would be for the long-term history of the subcontinent. These decisions would define who was an Indian and who was not; would determine whether there was to be one new nation, two nations, or more; and would bring about diverse consequences for everyone centrally and peripherally involved—for South Asians, for the imperial power withdrawing from its crown jewel, and for other empires in Africa and Asia.

In the decades after 1947 historians concentrated their energies on the high politics of negotiations between leaders, and on the chronologies of large-scale clashes of communities. Recently more attention has been paid to the personal experiences of men, women, and children caught in the maelstrom of continental upheaval and violence. In recent years Partition survivors have finally been interviewed in a way that was not done previously.

The investigation of the Partition of British India can lead one back a thousand years—or forty, or twenty, or ten, or one. Popular writers Dominique

Lapierre and Larry Collins chose the one-year focus for *Freedom at Midnight*,¹ but other authors, such as Sarojini Naidu, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Muhammad Iqbal, and Begum Shaista Ikramullah, have sought the roots of South Asia's division in the relations of the Hindu and Muslim communities in the region over a millennium, or in the communal conflicts of the nineteenth or twentieth centuries.

One question above all emerges from discussions of Partition: was it inevitable, and if it was, when and how did it become so? To say that an event was inevitable from a certain point in time means that the participants at that moment had no other choices. However, many scholars have suggested that there were a variety of choices even in 1946 and 1947. Abul Kalam Azad, an important Congress leader of that period, maintained in his account, *India Wins Freedom*, written ten years later, that Congress could have and should have adhered to its decision to accept the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946. Had it done so, he argued, there would have been no Partition, and history would have turned out much more fruitfully for all South Asians. He believed that alternatives were still available, therefore, in the spring of 1947. But he did not, according to independent sources, fight vigorously and openly to avoid Partition in the spring of 1947.

Some other writers on the Partition have selected out events of Hindu-Muslim antagonism through the twentieth century to show that the 1947 Partition had long been inevitable. But they have neglected the many instances of Hindu-Muslim cooperation during the same period. Many protagonists of the 1940s interviewed by one of the editors of this volume (LAG) maintained that the Great Calcutta Killing of August 1946 heightened tensions between Hindus and Muslims, and made it much harder for them to contemplate living together in one new nation.²

However one wishes to talk about either the “inevitability” of Partition or the potential malleability of Hindu-Muslim relations, it is also important to see that although crucial nationalist and religious choices were made in 1946 and 1947 by many protagonists—British and Indian, Muslim, Sikh, and Hindu—those choices were not always irrevocable. Some Indians chose one nationality in the immediacy of the moment, and later decided to make another choice. For example, many of those in East Bengal, such as Bengalis who had opted for Pakistan in 1947, made a different determination in 1971. The same is true in regard to religion; some people, a few by choice and some by coercion, changed their religion. In spite of the political rhetoric of the time, therefore, it is not helpful to essentialize “Hinduness” and “Muslimness.”

In a broad and simplified view, three large historical trends intersected and interacted throughout the history of twentieth-century South Asia: the slow retreat of British imperialism, the growth of Indian nationalism, and the development of Muslim separatism. Most officials who served the Raj believed it would go on indefinitely—a view that one student of imperialism called “the illusion

of permanence.”³ However, some British officials, such as Macaulay in the 1830s, could already envision a time of Indian self-government.

In the course of the nineteenth century, the British laid out categories in the census within which to “capture” all Indians. A number of historians have emphasized this process of categorization as contributing to an increasing antagonism between religious communities (what is called in the Indian context “communalism”), for communities were defined and pitted against one another in imperial calculations and political policy. That is, these historians argue that through the very construction and utilization of their categories, the British had already begun dividing India against itself.⁴

After the Rebellion of 1857, or what Hindu nationalist V. D. Savarkar called “the first war of independence,” the British created legislative councils to keep themselves better informed. The progressive granting of wider powers to, and election of some members to, the legislative councils in 1892, 1909, and 1919 further associated Indians with the Raj. Indians differed in their opinions of these reforms—some grasping them eagerly, others ignoring them as mere tidbits offered by an all-powerful imperial government. In any case, more and more Indians were beginning to vote for officials at the local, regional, and national levels, and gaining experience of government and administration. While the Moderates acquiesced in the Raj and simply wanted a larger role, the so-called Extremists, beginning from Tilak and his supporters, wanted independence.

Educated Indians were also aware of the gradual evolution of self-government in the white settlement colonies of the empire: Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa (which all had nonwhite populations almost invisible to their rulers). As Indians participated in institutions of government, they felt no less able than their colleagues of European birth to run their own affairs. But the racism that became ever more powerful through the nineteenth century meant to their rulers that Indians were different and, in the view of some of these Europeans, in need of endless tutorials in handling their own affairs. It was up to Indians to dissuade them from this view. To some, inspired by Tilak and others who thought all means were permissible in liberating one’s country from oppression, violence was an acceptable path. But British India was to a large extent disarmed, and advocates of violence did not find their tools easily at hand.

With the Swadeshi movement and then the coming of Gandhi, first thousands and then millions were gradually brought into a nationalist movement that was conceived as non-violent. The Congress, which Gandhi led from the front or guided from behind the scenes from 1919 into the 1940s, claimed to speak for all Indians, and aimed at membership from all communities. Although the Congress was growing apace, built up by Gandhi and his lieutenants as a formidable organization for agitation and struggle, it lacked widespread Muslim support. Through the twisted course of twentieth-century

politics, early efforts at Hindu–Muslim cooperation were vitiated over time: the Congress and the Muslim League signed a pact in 1916, and the Congress joined the Khilāfat movement of the early 1920s. But from then onward, from 1928 to 1947, endless efforts at negotiation, alliance, and understanding all somehow failed.

The Muslim League was formed in 1906. The British undoubtedly played a role in its creation, and encouraged Muslim grievances against the Congress in order to undercut support for the main nationalist organization. The Congress-League, or Lucknow, Pact of 1916 accepted separate electorates for Muslims and weightage in the provinces, but was soon denounced by some who had signed it because it gave the Muslims of the Punjab and Bengal fewer seats than their percentage of the population (see the Congress-League Scheme of 1916). Realizing the necessity of a Hindu–Muslim alliance, however, Gandhi called for Congress to support the Muslim community in its agitation for retention of the Caliphate, through the Khilāfat Movement. Throughout this period and even later, some politicians were members of several organizations simultaneously; for example, Jinnah was both a Muslim Leaguer and a Congressman until 1920. Historians and public men and women are still searching for ways to understand better how Hindu–Muslim relations evolved in the first half of the twentieth century, and even India's best intellectuals—men like Rabindranath Tagore, Lajpat Rai, and B. R. Ambedkar, who lived during those pre-Partition years—experienced in their own lives the difficulty of navigating through these waters.

The Khilāfat agitation died ignominiously with the establishment of a secular Turkish state in 1924, and then the Congress and the League had to try to find common ground on Indian issues. C. R. Das's effort to secure all-India support for the Bengal Pact of 1924 (which included significant concessions by the Bengal Congress in order to secure Hindu–Muslim unity) failed. The Simon Commission of 1928 was set up to review the working of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919, but the All-Parties meetings, stimulated by the formation of this commission, failed to produce an agreed-upon solution for political advance. The British government thereafter challenged Indians to draw up their own scheme for self-government. The (Motilal) Nehru Commission was the result, but it would not accept what leading Muslim organizations and their spokesman Muhammad Ali Jinnah wanted: separate electorates for Muslims and one-third of the seats in all assemblies. This impasse led eventually to the British imposition of their own solutions, embodied in the Government of India Act of 1935. The act specified that Muslims should be given separate electorates and allotted seats in the various provinces. Scheduled Castes were to be given reserved seats, but not the separate electorates that Dr. Ambedkar had wanted. The Congress was especially unhappy with how few seats were given to caste Hindus in Bengal. After the act was implemented in 1936 the Congress and League had difficulty finding common ground in any negotiations, be-

cause Jinnah and the League claimed to speak for all of India's Muslims, while the Congress claimed to speak for all Indians, including Muslims.

Indeed, one regional population of Muslims, Pathans in the Northwest Frontier Province, led by Abdul Ghaffar Khan (1890–1988) and his organization, the Khudai Khidmatgars (“Servants of God,” also called “Red Shirts”), supported Gandhi and the Congress. In addition to these Red Shirts, many Deoband ulema from the Jamiat-Ulema-e-Hind (Organization of Indian [Muslim Religious] Scholars), led by Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani (1879–1957), worked with the Congress from the 1920s to 1947, though occasionally in disagreement with it. For example, they did not accept the provision for joint electorates laid out in the Nehru Report. However, Madani said in an earlier address to a Muslim conference in 1924:

Hindu–Muslim unity is a perquisite for freedom of India. It is the religious and political duty of the Muslims that they should work for the freedom of India and continue this struggle until the Government accedes to their demand. It is their duty, which they must do with or without companions, it is the order of the Almighty. If non-Muslims extend to you the hand of friendship, you too must extend yours, for compromising for the right cause will establish you as true believers in Allah. And, if they (non-Muslims) turn their back on you and leave you alone, you should not complain about it because Allah is your biggest support.⁵

Madani, like Ghaffar Khan, sustained his belief in one composite nationalism for India, with the Muslims as natives of the subcontinent and equal citizens of India. He asserted of the 1940 Pakistan Resolution that it was the “death-knell for the Muslims of the areas where they were in a minority.”⁶ The Jamiat-Ulema-e-Hind passed a resolution opposing the establishment of a separate Muslim nation in 1940 that said in part,

The Indian Muslim . . . is unquestionably an Indian national and in every part of the country is entitled to equal privileges with that of every Indian national in every sphere of governmental, economic and other national activities and in public services . . . The goal of Indian Muslims is complete independence along with protection of their religion and communal rights.⁷

The Deoband ulema who were led by Madani were left in India as Pakistan was formed, since Deoband was within the boundaries of the new India. Abdul Ghaffar Khan, on the other hand, was thrust into a Pakistan he did not want, and soon became a political prisoner.

The first suggestions for a separate Muslim state, or at least an autonomous Muslim part of South Asia, date from the 1930s (see the selections from Iqbal

and Rahmat Ali). Historian S. R. Mehrotra pointed out years ago that if the Muslims had had a majority nowhere, then they would not have been able to argue for a separate state.⁸ But since they had a majority in areas of the northwest and northeast, they could and did argue that these areas—they wanted all of Bengal and all of the Punjab—should be separated off from Hindustan to form their Pakistan. All the participants knew that the British had partitioned Bengal in 1905 (but within India) and Ireland in 1921, and had put forth a plan to partition Palestine in 1938. “Divide and Quit,” as Penderel Moon later titled his excellent book on Partition, was not an unknown strategy.⁹

The poor showing of the Muslim League in the 1936–1937 elections emboldened the Congress to start a Muslim mobilization campaign of its own, while the Muslim League and its allies harped on Muslim grievances in provinces of India ruled by Congress ministries. Both these steps contributed to the growing alienation between the Congress and the League.

It must also be noted, as Dr. Ambedkar did indeed note (see the selections from his *Pakistan*), that more and more violent communal clashes between Hindus and Muslims, also occasionally involving Sikhs, occurred during the three decades prior to 1947 in Bombay, U.P. (Uttar Pradesh), Bengal, and other parts of northern India. While many historians (particularly those who want to push the “inevitability” of Partition earlier and earlier) have emphasized the significance of these clashes, others have countered that there were countervailing forces: numerous ways in which Hindus and Muslims collaborated, lived together and worked together, formed friendships with each other, and shared cultural activities. Ambedkar argued forcefully that Partition made no sense in rational terms, but should be granted because it had become an emotional issue for many Muslims, though they did not understand its consequences.

While the Raj was not directly involved in the Congress–Muslim League negotiations until World War II, its actions seemed to support the Muslim League and to continue division within India—what has been called “divide and rule.” With the coming of World War II, this bias increased, as the League backed the British war effort, while the Congress protested against the Raj’s unilateral declaration of war on behalf of India. The Cripps Mission of 1942, which offered responsible self-government after World War II, failed; although it had made no progress it seemed to give the Muslim League a veto. Gandhi is reported to have quipped, “their offer was equivalent to a post-dated cheque on a failing bank.” Launching the Quit India movement in 1942, the Congress then called for all-out non-cooperation, and its members were underground or suffering mass imprisonment during the war period.

With Congress sidelined, there were three openly functioning parties left: the Muslim League, the Communist Party of India, and the Hindu Mahasabha. Of these three, the Muslim League was most successful in building up its base, as it demonstrated in the elections of 1945–1946. The Communist Party of India also emerged out of illegality in 1941 once it declared World War II a

“People’s War,” and it put forth its own position on India as a nation of many nations. Dr. G. D. Adhikari argued that India was a multinational nation and that Pakistan should be allowed self-determination. This had the effect of aligning the League and the Communists, ideologically. The Hindu Mahasabha, which of course was against division of the country and what it perceived as capitulation to League demands, gained increasing influence upon the Congress.

During the war, Subhas Chandra Bose set up the Provisional Government of Free India and the Indian National Army. This small army joined with the Japanese in their invasion of India in 1944. Bose believed that all Indian communities should work together for independence, and he tried to implement a policy of communal sharing and interaction to achieve this end during the war. After the war, the British decided to try three officers of the Indian National Army—a Hindu, a Muslim, and a Sikh—for making war against the king-emperor. All Indian communities and organizations joined in demonstrating against this trial. A heady moment of communal cooperation led to the defendants’ immediate release, even though they had been convicted. But then it was back to business as usual, and mutual opposition between the Congress and the Muslim League.

Once the League had shown its stronger backing and had swept most of the reserved Muslim seats in the 1945–1946 elections, the Raj accepted the League as an equal player in the negotiations leading to the transfer of power in 1947. The League had a virtual veto power over plans put forth for the shape of an independent South Asia. By 1940, with the passage of the Lahore Resolution at the Muslim League session of that year, the League put forth, at least on paper, the argument for at least some kind of division of South Asia. Exactly what Jinnah and the League wanted has been much argued about; Ayesha Jalal, in *The Sole Spokesman*, has maintained that Jinnah had not committed himself to an independent Pakistan until near the very end of these negotiations in 1947.¹⁰ The Congress, though long opposed to any division of the subcontinent on the basis of religion, offered a variety of responses to the Lahore (or Pakistan) Resolution. One of these was presented by C. Rajagopalachari, who put forth a resolution within the Congress holding that if India were ever divided, all efforts must be made to draw the boundary so that the maximum number of Indians opposed to Pakistan would be kept within the borders of India.

The argument over the Cabinet Mission and subsequent proposals focused mostly on the areas where Muslims were a majority, or at least a significant part, of the population. The Muslim League conceded all of South India—except perhaps the princely state of Hyderabad—to a future Hindustan. The disputed areas were in the northern swath of India: the Punjab, Sindh, Bengal, Assam, and later the princely state of Kashmir.

Lord Wavell, viceroy from 1943 to early 1947, released Mahatma Gandhi from prison in 1944 so that Gandhi could meet with Jinnah and move toward a

League–Congress rapprochement. Little was gained in these talks, or at the Simla meetings held after the war. Gandhi called the Pakistan proposal a plan to “vivisection” India, and thought that Muslims, in the end, would oppose it. In the spring of 1946, the new Labour government of Clement Attlee, pledged to independence for India, sent the Cabinet Mission to India to try to see if it could try to find a new formulation for constitutional advance, in consultation with the major parties. The mission put forward a scheme for an independent India, including a grouping of provinces, with the proviso that groups might secede from the larger structure. This federal structure had a weak center and strong stipulations for regional powers. It seemed that the Congress and League agreed to this plan, but then Jawaharlal Nehru, apparently speaking for the Congress, said that the Congress would not necessarily be bound by the groupings specified in the plan, and that once a constituent assembly met, it could decide anything it wanted. This was completely unacceptable to the Muslim League, which then backed away from the scheme and refused to join the interim government which Lord Wavell had decided to form.

Instead, the League, for the first time in its history, called for a Direct Action Day, August 16, 1946. Disaster ensued. In the Great Calcutta Killing, thousands died, and riots followed in other areas of East Bengal and the Gangetic plain. These riots contributed mightily to the belief by many Hindus and Muslims that they would be better off in separate nations, if these could be constructed out of the British Raj.

In September 1946, after the Calcutta riots, the Muslim League decided to join the interim government, a cabinet and ministries headed by Indians under the supervision of the viceroy. To meet a stipulation by Viceroy Wavell that at least one important position in the interim cabinet go to the League, Liaquat Ali Khan was sworn in as finance minister. Every activity needed funding, and the new finance minister held up every Congress proposal for severe scrutiny or blockage. This made Interim Prime Minister Nehru and Interim Home Minister Vallabhbhai Patel (1875–1950)¹¹ dubious about future work with the League within one united and independent India.

With the Congress and League at loggerheads in the interim government and a deteriorating law and order situation around them, Wavell packed off the leaders of the Congress and League to London for a conference at the end of 1946. This also failed to produce the necessary signs of cooperation. Facing what looked like a dead end and committed to independence for India, British Prime Minister Attlee decided in January 1947 to strike out on new ground. Wavell was terminated as viceroy and the new and last viceroy, Lord Louis Mountbatten (1900–1979), was chosen. Mountbatten’s charge was to transfer power no later than August 1948 to one or more new states. He arrived in March, and set about his task with his usual energy and organization. After meeting all the principals, listening to their views, and getting a sense of their personalities, Mountbatten decided that the gap between the Congress and the

League was too deep to bridge. Although he maintained that he had always wanted to transfer power to one India, within a few weeks he committed himself and his government to dividing India. Mountbatten blamed Jinnah's rigidity for the need to do so.

Not only did Mountbatten have to persuade all the parties to accept a particular plan for division, but he also had to set a calendar for the steps forward. First, he worked on Congress leaders Patel and Nehru and got them to agree to Partition, but only after specifying that independent India was the main legatee of the Raj, and Pakistan was the seceder. Then he had to try to pacify some Hindu and Muslim Bengalis who did not want Bengal divided. And he had to try to calm the Sikhs, who saw that they would have a majority nowhere and realized, correctly, that they would be devastated by the division. Mountbatten never satisfied the Bengalis, the Sikhs, or the Muslims, including Congress leader Maulana Azad and Pathan followers of Abdul Ghaffar Khan in the North-west Frontier Province. According to Azad, Patel was the first to come around to accepting Partition, and he pressed Nehru and then Gandhi to do likewise. The latter two were more opposed than Patel to the division of India on the basis of religion, but both were pragmatic enough to see, eventually, that many were coming to accept it. It could only be opposed, Gandhi said, if public opinion was against it. As he explained to Sarat Bose, this public opposition was not there. He could do nothing. On Partition day Sarat Bose and Gandhi sat in silence.

Jinnah certainly was unhappy with the "maimed, mutilated and moth-eaten" Pakistan—lacking East Punjab, West Bengal, and Calcutta—that Mountbatten offered him in May 1947, and one can get a feel for how these events looked from the Muslim League perspective from the autobiography, *From Purdah to Parliament*, penned by Jinnah's friend Begum Ikramullah. Mountbatten was following the logic of the Rajaji (C. Rajagopalachari) formula: you must divide India so that the maximum number of Hindus (and others) who want to remain in India are on one side, and the maximum of Muslims who want to leave are on the other. This led down the path of the division of the two large and important provinces of the Punjab and Bengal. Jinnah, very unwillingly, accepted the deal, as did the Congress.

With the main lines of division set, riots continuing, and the loyalty of Indian police and armed forces in question, Mountbatten fixed a forced march to a British exit on August 15, 1947, a year earlier than originally planned by Attlee. Attaching his countdown calendars on the walls of relevant offices, instructing his staff and political leaders, Mountbatten pushed on for a British withdrawal from their crown jewel, just over two months after the formal agreement to the Partition plan on June 3. Everything had to be divided, and the boundary commission had to set to work. Lord Cyril Radcliffe was appointed to head this latter body, but its findings were not to be announced until after August 15. A procedure for dealing with the five-hundred-odd princely states also had to be laid

out and implemented. Whether Mountbatten rushed too fast, or acted appropriately to fulfill his mission, will be debated forever.

As it gradually dawned on the populace what was taking place, many were stunned: millions of Hindus and Sikhs would end up in a Muslim nation if they did not migrate; millions of Muslims would undoubtedly end up in what the League called Hindustan even if tens of millions moved to Pakistan. Ordinary people had to figure out what to do as August 15 approached, and then after the boundary commission's findings were published. Extraordinary things happened not only for the new nations, but for ordinary men, women, and children trapped in circumstances beyond their control. As Urvashi Butalia and other writers have shown, the consequences for women and children were more dire than for any others. Decades of silence have followed the unspeakable acts done and painful choices made in those days. Decisions were made and remade. Estimates of the dead range from 200,000 to one million; in addition, thousands of families were destroyed or reshaped. The families, politics, economies, and cultures of the new nations were shaped and reshaped by the hostilities of the pre-Partition days and the terrible killings of the months after Partition. These led to lasting antagonisms between the new nations. India and Pakistan are still figuring out how to live together, and hopeful negotiations are frequently followed by disillusionment. Ordinary people who want a satisfactory end to the tensions and wars between India and Pakistan—and now to the threat of nuclear war between nations armed with such weapons—have not yet been able to push their leaders to make a lasting peace.

The crisis of 1969 to 1971 in East Pakistan, the breaking up of East and West Pakistan, and the establishment of Bangladesh as a new nation demonstrated forcefully that choices that had been made in 1947 could be revised, and a new sense of nationality developed (see chapter 10). Within India as well, there were crises that led many of its citizens to question their choices of 1947. Communal riots between Hindus and Muslims have continued, with some of the worst following the destruction of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in December 1992 and the anti-Muslim pogroms in Gujarat in 2002. The rise to power and rule for some years by the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government—with its ideology of Hindu nationalism (muted or overt)—has made some Muslims feel less than full citizens. But not only the Muslims have been made to feel unsettled: Sikhs and Christians also have had dreadful episodes of havoc wrought upon them since the 1990s.

THE CONGRESS–MUSLIM LEAGUE SCHEME OF REFORMS, OR LUCKNOW PACT, 1916

For several years during World War I, while many Indians were professing loyalty to the Raj and many thousands of Indian troops were fighting in Europe to defend the empire, the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League had been discussing

an agreement about a plan of constitutional advance. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, a member of both organizations, took a leading role in this rapprochement. The scheme that was agreed to in 1916 provided for separate electorates for Muslims in the elections both for the provincial legislative councils and, indirectly, for the imperial legislative council. The Muslims were also to have one-third of the seats in the imperial council. It laid out percentages of reserved seats for them in the provincial councils, giving them less than their percentage of the population in some areas, more in others. The Punjab and Bengal were most at issue, and the agreement called for 50 percent of the seats in the Punjab Council and 40 percent in Bengal. This latter provision angered Bengali Muslim leaders in subsequent years, since Muslims were about 54 percent of the population. They believed they were shortchanged.

Other provisions of the pact called for political advances for Indians in ruling their own country. These were to be achieved by a much wider franchise (details unspecified); by giving Indians a greater role in provincial councils working with the governors of the provinces and in the governor-general's council; and by limiting the role of nominated members and the Indian Civil Service. It also called for the abolition of the advisory council to the secretary of state for India in London, which Indians believed was populated by retired and reactionary civil servants.

Although the Congress–League pact had no visible or practical effect upon the British, it marked the beginning of about a decade in which there was considerable cooperation between Hindus and Muslims in the Congress and League. There were ups and downs, until the rejection of the Nehru Report recommendations in 1928 by Jinnah. The scheme also encouraged the British to formulate and implement their own reform program, known as the Government of India Act of 1919 or the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms.

I. PROVINCIAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS

1. Provincial Legislative Councils shall consist of $\frac{4}{5}$ elected and of $\frac{1}{5}$ nominated members.
2. Their strength shall be not less than 125 members in the major provinces, and from 50 to 75 in the minor provinces.
3. The members of Councils should be elected . . . on as broad a franchise as possible.
4. Adequate provision should be made for the representation of important minorities by election, and the Mahomedans should be represented through special electorates on the Provincial Legislative Councils in the following proportions:

Punjab—One-half of the elected Indian Members

United Provinces—30 p.c. " "

Bengal—40 p.c. " "

Bihar—25 p.c. " "

Central Provinces—15 p.c. " "

Madras—15 p.c " "

Bombay—One-third " "

. . . No Mahomedan shall participate in any of the other elections to the Imperial or Provincial Legislative Councils, save and except those by electorates representing special interests.

Provided further that no Bill, nor any clause thereof, nor a resolution introduced by a non-official member affecting one or the other community, which question is to be determined by the members of that community in the Legislative Council concerned, shall be proceeded with, if three-fourths of the members of that community in the particular Council, Imperial or provincial, oppose the Bill or any clause thereof, or the resolution. . . .

7. (a) Except customs, post, telegraph, mint, salt, opium, railways, army and navy, and tributes from Indian States, all other sources of revenue should be provincial.
- (b) There should be no divided heads of revenue. The Government of India should be provided with fixed contributions from the Provincial Governments, such fixed contributions being liable to revision when extraordinary and unforeseen contingencies render such revision necessary.
- (c) The Provincial Council should have full authority to deal with all matters affecting the internal administration of the province including the power to raise loans, to impose and alter taxation, and to vote on the Budget. . . .
- (e) A resolution passed by the Provincial Legislative Council shall be binding on the Executive Government, unless vetoed by the Governor in Council, provided, however, that if the resolution is again passed by the Council after an interval of not less than a year, it must be given effect to.
9. A Bill, other than a Money Bill, may be introduced in Council in accordance with rules made in that behalf by the Council itself, and the consent of the Government should not be required. . . .

II. PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS

1. The head of every Provincial Government shall be a Governor who shall not ordinarily belong to the Indian Civil Service or any of the permanent services.
2. There shall be in every province an Executive Council, which, with the Governor, shall constitute the Executive Government of the Province.
3. Members of the ICS shall not ordinarily be appointed to the Executive Councils.
4. Not less than one-half of the members of the Executive Council shall consist of Indians to be elected by the elected members of the Provincial Legislative Council. . . .

III. IMPERIAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

1. The strength of the Imperial Legislative Council [shall] be 150.
2. Four-fifths of the members shall be elected.
3. The franchise for the Imperial Legislative Council should be widened as far as possible on the lines of the electorates for Mahomedans for the Provincial Legislative Councils, and the elected members of the Provincial Legislative Councils should also form an electorate for the return of members to [the] Imperial Legislative Council.
4. One-third of the Indian elected members should be Mahomedans elected by separate Mahomedan electorates in the several provinces, in the proportion, as may be, in which they are represented on the Provincial Legislative Councils by separate Mahomedan electorates. . . .
16. The Imperial Legislative Council shall have no power to interfere with the Government of India's direction of the military affairs and the foreign and political relations of India, including the declaration of war, the making of peace and the entering into treaties.

IV. THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

The Governor-General of India will be the head of the Government of India . . . [and] will have an Executive Council, half of whom shall be Indians . . . elected by the elected members of the Imperial Legislative Council. . . .

V. THE SECRETARY OF STATE IN COUNCIL

1. The Council of the Secretary of State for India should be abolished.
2. The salary of the Secretary of State should be placed on the British Estimates.
3. The Secretary of State should, as far as possible, occupy the same position in relation to the Government of India, as the Secretary of State for the Colonies does in relation to the Governments of the self-Governing Dominions.
4. The Secretary of State for India should be assisted by two permanent Under-Secretaries, one of whom should always be an Indian.

VI. INDIA AND THE EMPIRE

In any Council or other body which may be constituted or convened for the settlement . . . of Imperial affairs, India shall be adequately represented in like manner with the Dominions and with equal rights. . . . Indians should be placed on a footing of equality in respect of status and rights of citizenship with other subjects of His Majesty the King throughout the Empire.

VII. MILITARY AND OTHER MATTERS

The military and naval services of His Majesty, both in their commissioned and non-commissioned ranks, should be thrown open to Indians, and adequate provision should be made for their selection, training and instruction in India. . . .

[From *The Report of the 31st Indian National Congress* (1916),
as reproduced in C. H. Philips, ed., *The Evolution of India and Pakistan*,
1858–1947: *Select Documents* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 172–173.]

SAROJINI NAIDU: HINDUS, MUSLIMS, AND INDIAN UNITY

Details about the life of Naidu, including her championing of Hindu–Muslim cooperation, were given in chapter 4.

IN SUPPORT OF THE LUCKNOW PACT

The first of the two speeches excerpted below is in support of the Congress–Muslim League Pact, or Scheme of Reforms; the second was given after a communal riot in Patna in 1917, in order to encourage amity between the communities.

With regard to communal representation . . . I think you will find that the majority of thinking men, Hindus and Muslims, are in agreement that the principle of communal representation is not the ideal one, but in practical politics sometimes we have to go by expediency towards the path of the ideal and that is why till we are able to establish that abiding trust in each other, love and co-operation, there should be communal representation. It is [a] temporary barrier between community and community and directly trust is established. . . . Nobody will want separate representation but we will establish the true democracy of Indian life by saying the best men shall represent the best interests of India. . . . My own feeling is this . . . that had you not provided generously for the separate representation, it were not possible that within 5 years Mussalman brethren would have stood shoulder to shoulder with you, for, disorganized and so much behind the Hindu community they were . . . they began their political education later. . . . It was necessary for them to consolidate themselves as a unit first before they could come in a body to work side by side with their Hindu brethren. . . . we must support the Congress-League scheme. . . . It is an imperfect scheme. . . . If you are united, if you forget your community and think of the nation, if you forget your city and think of the province, if you forget you are a Hindu and remember the Mussalman, if you forget you are a Brahman and remember the Panchama then and then alone will India progress.

[From Verinder Grover and Ranjana Arora, eds., *Great Women of Modern India* (New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, 1993), 3:47–50.]

FOR THE EVOLUTION OF NATIONAL LIFE

Centuries ago when the first Islamic army came to India, they pitched their caravans on the banks of the sacred Ganges and tempered and cooled their swords in the sacred waters. It was the baptism of the Ganges that gave the first welcome to the Islamic invaders that became the children of India as generations went by. And today, in speaking of the Hindu–Moslem Unity, we should bear in mind that historic circumstance, that historic culture, that historic evolution for which the Gangetic valley has stood in bringing about the Hindu–Muslim relationship age after age. . . . I wish to invoke in your hearts . . . a sense of responsibility. . . . It is only because we are ignorant that we are divided and it is the sacred mission of enlightenment to bring not the lesson of quarrel but the lesson of peace. That is the problem with which we have to deal today. . . . What is the meaning, what is the significance of the Hindu–Moslem Unity? There is so much misconception abroad that if a Muslim shows sympathy towards a Hindu, he becomes a traitor and if a Hindu shows sympathy towards a Muslim he becomes an outcast. But what is the reason of this mistrust of those who stand as links between the two races? Nothing save our misreading of the entire purpose of national history. The problem of the Hindu–Muslim Unity stands like this: There are in India two communities (I will not say two races), two communities that are separated by that they consider the difference of creeds. But when you come to analyse this difference of creed you begin to find that after all, fundamentally, the teaching that came in the wake of the Muslim conquerors was the same as the teaching that arose in the great hymns in the sacred mountain regions of the Himalayas and on the sacred Ganges five thousand years ago. It means essentially the love of truth, the love of purity, the service of humanity, the search for wisdom, the great lessons of self-sacrifice, the worship of the same Transcendent Spirit, no matter whether in language it was called Allah and in another Parmeswar (*applause*). After all what is this antagonism between creed and creed? Antagonism is merely the asset of the ignorant. They are not the weapons of the wise, who realise that after all it is only the misunderstanding of the essential truth where in lies the difficulty in launching across that golden bridge of sympathy that brings together the two great communities whose fundamental teaching is the love of God and the service of men. And then in this great country the Moslems came to make their home not to carry spoils and to go back to their own home but to build permanently here their home and create a new generation for the enrichment of the Motherland. How can they live separate from the people of the soil? Does history say that in the past they have so lived separate? Or rather it says that once having chosen to take up their abode in this land they became the children of the soil, the very flesh of our flesh and blood of our blood. . . . See what were the chief characteristics of the Mughal Rule. Not that the Hindus were kept at arms length, but that the Emperor Akbar took his son to Rajputana, so that the blood of the conqueror and the blood of the conquered were mixed to create a new generation

of Indians in India. . . . Keep your separate entities, keep your separate creed, but bring to the federated India the culture of centuries to enrich with all those contributions that each has to make for the sum total, for the healthful growth of the national progress. Who says that we want in India marriage between the Hindus and the Mussalmans so that each might lose its own special characteristics? India is so complex in the problem of her civilisation, in her races and her creeds that it is impossible, that it is even very undesirable—nay, psychologically false,—were we to say that we desire a unity that means the merging of the separate races to make one kind of common life for the common weal of the country. What we want is this: that for the evolution of national life we want the Mussalmans to bring their special characteristics and so we want the Hindus to contribute theirs and considering the chivalry of the past allow no minority to suffer. We are not limiting ourselves to the contributions of the Hindu-Muslim culture alone, but we want the special contributions which the Zoroastrians and the Christians and other races . . . can bring us. Gentlemen, do not for a moment entertain any idea of exclusion, harbour any thought of isolation of one group from another, of one sect from another. But let each bring its own quota of special contributions as free gifts offered lovingly and generously at the feet of the great Motherland for the swelling of the national Commonwealth. . . . The Hindus have to bring to modern evolution of life the principal qualities of that spiritual civilization that gave to the world not merely the tone of the Upanishads, but created for the intellectual and the illiterate alike such glorious type of virtue, courage, wisdom, truth, as Ram among men and Savitri among women, that mystic genius of the Hindus, that spiritual passion, that fervour of self-abnegation, that great first realisation that the true measure of life is not the material, not the temporal, but the spiritual—that is the special contribution that the Hindu race has to make to the future evolution of India. And what of the Mussalmans? The first of the great world religions that thirteen hundred years ago laid down the first fundamental principles of Democracy was the religion of Islam. In [the] twentieth century we hear that the ideal of the future is Democracy. . . . The first secret of this great world-wide Democracy was laid in the desert sands of Arabia by a dreamer of the desert and it is the peculiar privilege of his spiritual children to bring to this mystic India of spiritual value that human sense of Democracy that makes the king and the beggar equal. . . . It implies a certain inviolable sense of justice that gives to every man his equal chance in the evolution of national life and these we want imported into our national life, assimilated into our national life which the Hindu community cannot; with its system of exclusion that have been the misinterpreted characteristic of a system that made it merely a true division of responsibility. I say the Hindu community by itself cannot evolve it because, Hindu as I am, I stand here to confess the limitation of my community. We have not mastered that fundamental equality that is the privilege of Islam. What is mutual cooperation? . . . We want that from the very beginning of our childhood there should be an in-

terchange of culture. . . . It is by this interchange of knowledge and culture of each community from its babyhood, that we shall be able to build up not merely that kinship that is born of political expediency. . . .

It becomes a very simple thing to say that all men are neighbours of one another, brothers, blood ties, because they have same tears and the same laughter . . . so why make difference between the tillers of the soil whether he is a Muslim or a Hindu? Does he not suffer from drought, from the failure of harvest, from pestilence, from locusts? The school master, whether he be a Hindu or a Mussalman, has he not the same responsibility of creating within his hands a bond between brother and brother whether he be a Hindu or a Mussalman? Then when floods come, and famines come, and plagues come, do not all of us suffer equally? . . . What has the corpse of a Hindu or a Mussalman done not to deserve the same sense of honour from each of us who are equally created by God and who have been equally subject to mortality? . . . This is the feeling of a generous love, of brotherly love that we want to establish as a thing flawless, and in the hearts of the Hindus towards Mussalmans . . . of manhood that does not consider petty differences of castes and creeds . . . the responsible sense of cooperation in the mutual reverence for each other's creed, mutual love for each other's civilisation, mutual trust in your common good intention and cooperation and equal responsibilities in the evolution of your great national life of tomorrow. That is the meaning of the Hindu-Muslim Unity.

[From Grover and Arora, eds., *Great Women of Modern India*, 3:106–110, 112–114.]

RABINDRANATH TAGORE ON HINDUS AND MUSLIMS

An introduction to Tagore appears in chapter 5.

A LETTER TO KALIDAS NAG

In response to a 1922 question from Kalidas Nag, a friend, writer, and occasional travelling companion, India's poet and leading public intellectual wrote him a letter about Hindus and Muslims, and other matters. In this unique dance around the correspondent's question, the poet testifies to what is important to him—the Sanskrit playwright Kalidasa, Indian classical music, the monsoon—and explores these before reaching the communal question, making clear that his timescale is different, that he is not a politician.

To Kalidas Nag, Santiniketan, 7 Ashadh 1359:

. . . Just when I was sitting at my window, humming:
My song takes its tune from the cloud
Newly risen on yon' horizon
My thoughts are wild and restless today
Without the faintest reason . . .

When from across the oceans your question came: what's the solution to India's Hindu–Mussalman problem? It suddenly brought me to the realization that I too had my responsibilities in human sansara [life]—it was not enough to respond to the clouds with [the musical mode] meghamallara, it is also my duty to address the questions that rumble across the human history, which realization forced me to take leave of the concert of Ambubachi.¹²

There are two religious nations in the world fiercely turned against each other: Islam and Christianity. These are not content with following the tenets of their own faith or tending to their own flock. They feel impelled to convert all others to their own faith. You cannot interact with them on level ground of faiths—you have to embrace their religion before you can you mingle with them. However, what is commendable about Christianity is that its followers have become vehicles of modernism. The Christian mind is not frozen in a medieval matrix. Not all of their activities have to conform to religious edicts. Therefore they do not have to keep others out of their wall of religion. “European” and “Christian” are not coterminous. There is no innate contradiction in “European Buddhist” or “European Muslim.” But when a community is identified entirely by its faith, then there is no room for other traits. You cannot have a “Muslim Buddhist” or a “Muslim Christian.” That way Hindus are the same as Mussalmans—they are as walled in by their religion as the Mussalmans—only their antagonism to other religions is not active—their relationship to others is of “non-violent non-recognition.” As Hinduism is acquired at birth, and is preserved by rituals, its walls are even harder to cross. On embracing Islam, the convert can meet a Muslim as an equal but that route [of conversion] into Hinduism is narrow to the extreme. Islam does not raise barriers around itself by dietary or social rules as Hinduism does; which is why at Khilafat Movement time, while Muslims could throw open their masjids [mosques] to Hindus, Hindus could not open up their temples. Social rules are designed to help people interact with strangers—but with Hindus these are ways of keeping people away. When I began my work as zamindar, I noticed that when a Mussalman tenant had to be given a seat at the cutchery, a corner of the mattress was folded, offering him the naked floor. There is no wall harder of crossing than when an unfamiliar custom is branded as “impure.” It is the fate of India to be the meeting place of the opposites—Hindus who are liberal about theology but unyielding on ritual, and Mussalmans, who are unyielding on doctrine, but without taboos about social practices. The door of one opens on the closed door of the other. How are they going to mix? There was a time when Greeks, Scythians, Persians and others merrily entered India and mingled with the other races. But remember that was before the “Hindu” era. The “Hindu” era is one of reaction, when a deliberate attempt was made to erect an impregnable Brahmanical citadel. An attempt was made to create a wall of custom and ritual to prevent intrusion by aliens. What was forgotten was that to encase a living being within hard

and sealed walls is to kill it. Anyway, after the Buddhist era, corralling such immigrant races as the Rajputs into its fold, Hinduism created with a great perseverance a wall around itself to prevent any contamination by aliens. The very essence of Hinduism is refusal and rejection. Nowhere in the world has such a web of rejection been created to seal out any scope of inter-action. This system does not work to keep Hindus and Mussalmans apart; it raises barriers between you and me who deny these barriers. This is the problem; but what is the solution? The answer is in change of minds, change of times. Just as Europe has, by its long quest for objectivity and truth, emerged from the Middle Ages into the Modern Era, the Hindu and Mussalman too will have to break out of their confines to journey into the open modern age. To turn one's faith into an unyielding coffin, and force an entire nation to lie inside it, frozen in the past, is no way to progress, let alone intercourse. Unless we get rid of the obstacles within our own psyche, there is no possibility of freeing ourselves externally. To achieve this freedom, we need education and sadhana [spiritual practice]. We have to understand that the wing is bigger than the cage. Only then can there be the good of well-being with us. The unity of Hindu–Mussalman needs a turn of the times. But there is no need for pessimism. Other nations have through their perseverance changed their times, have emerged from a stage of the chrysalis to that of the butterfly. We too will break out of our mental blocks—if we cannot, there will be no room for us on earth.

[From Tagore, *Kalantar* (Calcutta: Visvabharati, 1962), 311–314. Trans. Jyotirmoy Datta.]

THE BENGAL PACT: A PROVINCIAL EFFORT AT COMMUNAL RAPPROCHEMENT, 1923–1924

The Bengal Pact was an agreement made in December 1923 by C. R. Das, Congress leader, mayor of Calcutta, and leader of opposition in the Bengal Legislative Council, with Muslim leaders in Bengal, including Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, who was then a supporter of Das's Swaraj Party. It provided for giving Muslims more than 55 percent of the positions in the Calcutta Corporation and other government offices until they had a share equal to their percentage of the population. There were several other clauses that aimed at communal equality based on population and religious toleration. Approved by the Bengal Congress but rejected by the National Congress organization, it lapsed after Das's death in 1925. At the time he was imprisoned by the government of India, Subhas Chandra Bose was the officer of the Calcutta Corporation whose duty it was to implement the pact. The pact was a high-water mark of Hindu–Muslim cooperation in Bengal politics, and foreshadowed later joint efforts in 1941 and 1947.

The following resolutions were passed at this Swaraj Party conference:

A. HINDU—MUSLIM PACT

It is resolved that in order to establish real foundation of Self-Government in this province it is necessary to bring about a pact between the Hindus and the Mahomedans of Bengal dealing with the rights of each community when the foundation of Self Government is secured.

Be it resolved that:

(a) Representation in Council

Representation in the Bengal Legislative Council be on the population basis with separate electorates subject to such adjustment as may be necessary by the All-India—Hindu—Muslim Pact and by the Khilafat and the Congress.

(b) Representation in Local Bodies

Representation to local bodies to be in the proportion of 60 to 40 in every district—60 to the community which is in the majority, and 40 to the minority. Thus in a district where the Mahomedans are in majority they will get 60 per cent. Similarly where the Hindus are in majority they are to get 60 per cent, and the Mahomedans 40 [per] cent. The question as to whether there should be separate or mixed electorates is postponed for the present to ascertain the views of both communities.

(c) Government Posts

55 per cent of the Government posts should go to the Mahomedans . . . in the following manner:

——Fixing of tests of different classes of appointments. The Mahomedans satisfying the least test should be preferred till the above percentage is attained; and after that according to the proportion of 55 to 45 the former to the Mahomedans and the latter to the non-Mahomedans, subject to this that for the intervening years . . . say 20 per cent should go to the Hindus.

(d) Religious Toleration

- (1) In not allowing any resolution or enactment which affects the religion of any of the different communities without the consent of 75 per cent of the elected members of that community.
- (2) In not allowing music in procession before any mosque.
- (3) In not interfering with cow-killing for religious sacrifices.
- (4) In providing that no legislation or enactment in respect of cow-killing for food will be taken up in the Council. Endeavour should be made by members of both the communities outside the Council to bring about an understanding between the communities.
- (5) In providing that cow-killing should be carried on in such a manner as not to wound the religious feeling of the Hindus.
- (6) In providing for the formation every year of representative committees in every sub-division, of which half the members should be Ma-

homedans and half Hindus, each committee choosing its president from among themselves with power to prevent or arbitrate upon any dispute between the Hindus and Mahomedans in accordance with provision herein before stated.

B. PROGRAMME OF THE PARTY WITHIN THE COUNCIL

- (1) To insist on the release of all political prisoners.
- (2) To insist on the withdrawal of all repressive laws.
- (3) To recommend to the Assembly for the repeal of all repressive legislation.
- (4) Formulation of national demands for the province, which should be at least of effective provincial responsible Government.
- (5) Vote of no-confidence on Ministers, if necessary.
- (6) Reduction or refusal of salary to Ministers, if necessary.
- (7) All measures proposed by the Government to be rejected or postponed till the grant of the national demand.
- (8) If the Budget comes up before such grant it should be thrown out, unless . . . there is a change of situation which indicates an . . . inclination on the part of Government to concede the demands, in which case the party will meet to reconsider the situation.
- (9) The party will act as a whole and the decision of the majority will be implicitly obeyed by all the members.
- (10) Every member will attend unless prevented by illness or very urgent considerations.
- (11) No Swarajist should accept office until the national demand is granted.

Be it further resolved that with regard to the work within the Council the whole programme is subject to such revision or modification as the All-India Swarajya-Council may think necessary.

[From H. N. Mitra, ed., *The Indian Quarterly Register* 1, no. 1
(Calcutta: Annual Registry Office, Jan.-March 1924): 63-64.]

LALA LAJPAT RAI: A PLAN TO DIVIDE
THE PUNJAB AND BENGAL

An introduction to Lajpat Rai's life appears in chapter 5.

THE HINDU-MUSLIM PROBLEM, 1924

Coming from a province with almost equal numbers of Muslims and non-Muslims, Lajpat Rai had long been concerned with their relations. He was strongly critical of Muslims, but unhappy as well with some of his fellow-Hindus.

In a series of articles in 1924, later collected and reprinted as "The Hindu-Muslim Problem," he presented his views on how the main communities might better relate. Though insistent that separate electorates were anti-national, he also presented a plan to divide the Punjab and Bengal that foreshadowed what was to come two decades later.

I

The *Hindu-Muslim* problem is the problem of India. We have heard and read much of Hindu-Muslim unity. It is always a matter of controversy between the Anglo-Indian and the Nationalist. The former asserts and the latter denies the impossibility of Hindus and Muslims uniting together to form one nation. . . . Yet it is a fact that from 1919 to the end of 1921 Hindus and Muslims of India were fairly united. It was during this period that for the first time in the history of India a *Kafir* preached from the pulpit of the biggest and historically the most important and the most magnificent mosque of Northern India. It was during the same period that the *Malechhas* fraternised with the Hindus on the occasion of their religious festivals. It is also a fact that the amount of unity achieved in this short period, has since then melted down and for the last three years Hindus and Mussalmans have been at daggers drawn with each other to an extent never before known under British rule. . . . At the moment of writing, the relations between the two communities are strained almost to the breaking point. Communal riots and scuffles are of more frequent occurrence than ever before. . . . Even in Congress circles, in spite of much hugging and cooing, the relations between the leaders of the two communities are not free from distrust and suspicion. Hindu-Muslim unity is always put in the forefront of the Congress programme, but so far the leaders have failed to successfully grapple with the situation and find out a suitable solution. . . . Either they have lost influence with the masses or they are not sincere.

II

In the discussions at the Unity Conference held at Delhi one thing struck me very forcibly. That was the fact that so many of the ablest and most patriotic Muhammadan youngmen as well as a few Hindus were obsessed with the idea of "absolute rights." Time after time it was said that the Muhammadans had an inherent right to slaughter cows and that that right could only be curtailed by their own voluntary sacrifice. . . . The idea of absolute rights is a fallacious one and has really no foundation in law. . . .

I contend that there is no such thing as an absolute right vested in any individual or in any community forming part of a nation; that all rights are relative, that no society can remain intact even for twenty-four hours on the basis of absolute rights, that the idea of absolute rights was exploded long ago, because it was found to be not only wrong in theory but pernicious in practice. . . . All or-

ganic relations depend upon the mutual obligations of the members composing the organism. No part of the organism has any absolute right. Firstly, all the rights of an individual are subject to the equal rights of others, which fact creates duties and obligations on the part of the different members of a society towards each other. In a well ordered social organism no one has a right to do anything which will unreasonably clash with the legal interests of any one else. Nay, in order to secure goodwill and progress, the more advanced members of a social organism have sometimes to go further and sacrifice their interests for the commonweal, or for the benefit of the other members of the community. The protection of the poor, solicitude for providing for the necessities of those who cannot look after themselves, the widows, the orphans, the blind, the lame, the aged, the minor, etc., all fall under this category.

An individual may have an absolute right to think what he wishes, but the moment it comes to the expression of the thought in speech and action, his right is hedged round by conditions and limitations. This is the legal and the constitutional aspect of the question. . . . It is nobler to emphasize duties rather than rights. People who insist on rights rather than duties become selfish, proud and self-centred. Those who emphasise duties, are quite the reverse. The highest development of humanity and of the spirit of service requires greater emphasis being laid on duties than on rights. That is the teaching of almost all the great religions of the world if properly understood and rightly interpreted. That is the teaching of Buddha, Christ and Gandhi. It is also the lesson of actual day to day experience. . . .

I would advise my young countrymen to think over this question a little more deeply . . . and to free themselves from the obsession of this pernicious doctrine of rights. Unless this is done, there is no hope for unity in India. We must always remember that we are a sort of polyglot nation, much less homogeneous than any of those European or Western nations who have had to fight for their freedom. Such a country can never win its freedom, or, having won freedom, can never maintain it unless the various communities composing its people are inspired more by the ideal of duties than of rights. . . .

III

All those who aim at creating a United India, should remember that India is a land of many faiths and many religions; that these faiths and religions, again, are divided into sections and sub-sections; that these sections and sub-sections practise numerous religious observances[,] ceremonials and rituals and that some of these rituals and observances, conflict with one another. It is impossible for any Government to guarantee to all these religions, sections and sub-sections, full and complete freedom in the matter of the observance of all their rituals and ceremonials especially when they are in conflict with one another. Some of these ceremonials and observances, moreover, are inhuman, cruel and immoral. To insist upon . . . a strict and full observance of all their religious rituals and

ceremonials is, therefore, a clear impossibility, besides being directly opposed to the idea of a United India. The British Government, in spite of its professions of religious neutrality have, from time to time, interfered in the matter of religious practices; for example they stopped by legislation the inhuman practices of *Sati* and infanticide which Hindu orthodoxy contended was a part of its religion. . . .

Society cannot interfere with the beliefs of any one, but no progressive society can allow such practices to be carried on with impunity even in the name of religion as are revolting to the sense of humanity and morality of the vast bulk of its members. Even allowing the largest possible liberty in the matter of religious observances, no nation can for all time tolerate such practices.

. . . The idea of a United India demands that emphasis should be laid more on the points on which different religions agree than on the differences that divide them. The idea of a United India necessarily demands, therefore, the rationalising of religion and religious practices to the farthest extent possible. . . . Insistence on the observance of conflicting ceremonials has to be actively discouraged and all such ideas based on false notions of religion as increase hatred, estrange one community from another, and create barriers between different communities. . . .

Unfortunately for us even religious reform movements in India have in some cases taken a wrong turn. They have brought into prominence the observance of very many rites and ceremonies which do not form an integral part of the religions concerned and have nothing to do with *Dharma*. Communal consciousness, again, has come to be synonymous with the observance of such petty ceremonials as perpetuate differences and form a solid wall separating one community from another. The Arya Samaj, the Muhammadan reform movement and Sikh reform movement all illustrate this tendency and it cannot be denied that Mahatma Gandhi himself and the Khilafat movement,¹³ of which he was the strongest pillar, have also accentuated this feeling.

VIII

I am afraid Indian Muslims are more Pan-Islamic and exclusive than the Muslims of any other country on the face of the globe, and that fact alone makes the creation of a united India more difficult than would otherwise be the case. I am inclined to think that in this respect, at least, Sir Syed's policy was sounder than that of the Khilafatists. He did not believe in a religious Khilafat . . . and he was opposed to the Muslims of India devoting much attention to the affairs of Turkey or other Muslim countries.

IX

What I have said about Pan-Islamism and the excess of communalism among the Mussalmans, should not be understood to imply that Hindus on their side

have been quite inactive and innocent. . . . In their own way, Hindu revivalists have left nothing undone to create a strictly exclusive and aggressive communal feeling. Early in the eighties of the last century some of the Hindu religious leaders came to the conclusion that Hinduism was doomed unless it adopted the aggressive features of militant Islam and militant Christianity. The Arya Samaj is a kind of militant Hinduism. But the idea was by no means confined to the Arya Samaj. Swami Vivekanand and his gifted disciple Sister Nivedita, among others, were of the same mind. The articles which she wrote on aggressive Hinduism are the clearest evidence of that mentality.

It must be remembered in this connection that Western knowledge, Western thought and Western mentality took hold of the Hindu mind at a very early period of British rule. The Brahmo Samaj was the first product of it. In the early sixties the Brahmo Samaj was a non-Hindu body, and under its influence Hindu scholars, thinkers and students were becoming cosmopolitans. Some became Christians, others took to atheism and became completely westernised . . . The Arya Samaj movement and aggressive Hinduism was a reaction against that un-Hinduism and indifferentism. Most of the early Hindu leaders of the Indian National Congress were in this sense non-Hindus. What did Mr. S. N. Banerjea or [Bengali Congress leaders] Lal Mohan Ghosh or Ananda Mohan Bose care for Hinduism? . . . G. K. Gokhale was not a Hindu at all. . . . Thus the political nationalist movement of India was brought into existence by highminded Englishmen, enlightened and highminded Parsees, enlightened and highminded sons of Hindus (many of whom in their own mentality were either non-Hindus or indifferent Hindus) and a few enlightened and highminded Muslims. Born under these auspices, it was bound to be a movement of pure freedom. . . . It was, however, more a "*safety-valve*" than a movement of pure freedom. It was hardly three years old when its God-father, the Marquis of Dufferin [Viceroy 1884–1888] changed his mind and decided to strangle it. The best way to strangle it, he thought, was to rob it of its national character and to raise the religious and denominational bogey. The latter proved to be a Himalayan glacier, under whose weight it was bound either to perish or to be cracked so badly as to remain mangled all its life.

That Himalayan glacier was the late Sir Syed's opposition to the Congress on denominational grounds. I do not mean to say that Sir Syed's fears about his community were absolutely baseless, but the cry which he raised was practically the death-knell of Indian nationalism at the time. Sir Syed's attitude towards the Indiana National Congress was influenced by the following considerations:

(a) That in India the Hindus were in a majority, and if a form of democratic Government was accepted as the political goal of India, the Muslims were bound to be in a minority.

(b) That the Hindus were both economically and educationally more advanced than the Muslims, and would monopolise much of Government influence for a long time to come.

(c) That a Hindu Raj might possibly mean the death of Islam in India, or at least a position of subservience for it. . . . He, therefore, favoured the idea of perpetual British rule in this country.

The founders of the Indian National Congress, on the other hand, were absolutely honest and sincere nationalists. They did not entertain any anti-Muslim intentions, but they knew that nationalism could take no notice of denominationalism. Sir Syed's opposition, however, forced them to take some notice of it. It was by no conspiracy against the Muslims that the Hindus of that period came to occupy a large number and proportion of higher Government offices than their Muslim fellow-countrymen, and were more prominent and influential in the public life of the country. They . . . refused to accept communal representation in services under the Government for each community. The struggle continued for a long time, until the Congress surrendered. . . .

The acceptance of the principle of communal representation was a concession to religion and is the negation of nationalism. The supremacy of religion over State has thus been enthroned. Most Muslim leaders openly say that they are Muslims first and Indians afterwards, though in 1915, Mr. Mazhar-ul-Haq said from his place as President of the Muslim League that he was Indian from first to last. No one can be a true Nationalist who is not an Indian from first to last. He may be an Indian Hindu or an Indian Mussalman, but he must be an Indian all the time. A man who says he is prepared to sacrifice the freedom of India for the freedom of "Jazirat-ul-Arab" ["the Arab peninsula"] cannot be an Indian nationalist.

Leaders on both sides are emphatic that the present tension between the two communities is political and not religious. Muslims contend that the insufficiency and the unfairness of the Lucknow Pact are responsible for it. Hindus maintain that communal representation itself is at the bottom of the present trouble. Both are right in their own way. Whether the Lucknow Pact is unjust or unfair, it is certainly responsible for the Muslim demand for its extension to local bodies, government services and the educational institutions. . . . Practically all social relations between Hindus and Muhammadans, and Sikhs and non-Sikhs have ceased. All three communities have their separate clubs, separate organizations and separate colleges. . . . I am certain that religion is being used for political purposes, but I am also certain that there is a certain amount of genuine religious element in it.

X

The aggressive Hinduism preached by the Arya Samaj was not political in its conception. That it has been strengthened by political considerations cannot, however, be denied. . . . The principle of Shuddhi [cleansing, reconversion] has now been accepted by the Hindu Mahasabha, and I am free to confess that the idea at the back of this decision is partly political, partly communal and partly humanitarian, the latter element being more in evidence in the Shuddhi of the untouchables. . . .

XI

I will now offer a few observations on how the present situation can be improved. . . .

It is suggested on behalf of Muslim leaders that—

(a) Communal representation with separate electorates in all the legislatures, local bodies, Universities and other official or semi-official bodies should be provided. Mr. M. A. Jinnah is the latest recruit to this party, and I really cannot understand how he calls himself a nationalist still. The euphemism that this is only tentative and that a time will come when the Muslims will be ready to give up communal representation, should deceive no one. Once you accept communal representation with separate electorates, there is no chance of its being ever abolished, without a civil war. . . . Communal representation with separate electorate is the most effective reply to the demand for Swaraj, and the surest way of India never getting it. I have never been able to appreciate the mentality of those who constantly talk of turning out the British and at the same time insist on communal representation with separate electorates. I really don't understand what they mean. The second is the surest way of the first being never realized. The experience of the last three years is the most conclusive proof of it. The Muslim demand strengthens the position of anti-Swarajists both among the Hindus and the Muslims, and supplies an effective reply to the contention that India is ripe for Swaraj. Communal representation by itself is a sufficiently bad principle, destructive of, and antagonistic to, the idea of a common nationhood, but separate electorates make this vicious principle immeasurably worse. . . .

(b) Representation in provincial legislatures and local bodies should be on the basis of population in provinces and places where the Mussalmans are in a majority. In other provinces and places they should have "effective" minority representation.

(c) Posts and offices under Government should also be distributed on the principle stated in (b).

(d) In the provinces where the Muslims are in a minority as well as in the All-India Departments the Muslims ought to have 25 percent. to 33 percent. of the total posts.

We will take these clauses one by one, in their serial order.

The principle of clause (a) is both theoretically and practically a negation of the united nationhood. It provides for a complete division of India, as it is, into two sections: a Muslim India and a non-Muslim India. I say deliberately non-Muslim India, because all that the Muslims are anxious for, is a guarantee of their own rights. All the other communities they lump into one as non-Muslims. Let those who demand communal representation with separate electorates in all the representative institutions of the land, honestly confess that they do not believe in nationalism or in a united India. The two things are absolutely irreconcilable.

(b) The demand for proportionate representation in the Legislatures is perfectly reasonable provided the principle is accepted through and through. The plea for "effective" minority representation is, however, untenable. Mr. Jinnah has placed a special interpretation of his own on this term. . . . In Bengal and the Punjab, the Mussalmans are in a majority, and if this principle is accepted, they will rule over these Provinces. The Hindus in these Provinces according to the interpretation of Mr. Jinnah are an effective minority already; so they are not entitled to any special representation. But what about the Sikhs? Are they or are they not entitled to special representation? And from whose share are they to get it? From the share of the Hindus or that of the Muslims? Under no principle can they get it from the share of the Hindus. They must get it, if they must, from the Muslims' share on the same principle on which the Muslims themselves claim it in the U. P., or the other Provinces where they are in a minority. This will interfere with the absolute majority which Muslims demand over the Hindus and Sikhs combined. Some Mussalmans realize this and contend that they will be content with a bare majority of one or two. But it is obvious that they cannot have every thing in their own way. . . . The Punjab . . . is the home of a community who were the rulers of the Province when the British took possession of it. . . . Under the circumstances I would suggest that a remedy should be sought by which the Muslims might get a decisive majority without trampling on the sensitiveness of the Hindus and the Sikhs. My suggestion is that the Punjab should be partitioned into two provinces, the Western Punjab with a large Muslim majority, to be a Muslim-governed Province; and the Eastern Punjab, with a large Hindu-Sikh majority, to be a non-Muslim governed Province. I do not discuss Bengal. To me it is unimaginable that the rich and highly progressive and alive Hindus of Bengal will ever work out the Pact agreed to by Mr. Das. I will make the same suggestion in their case, but if Bengal is prepared to accept Mr. Das's Pact, I have nothing to say. It is its own look-out.

Maulana Hasrat Mohani¹⁴ has recently said that the Muslims will never agree to India's having Dominion status under the British. What they aim at are separate Muslim States in India, united with Hindu States under a National Federal Government. He is also in favour of smaller States containing compact Hindu and Muslim populations. If communal representation with separate electorates is to be the rule, then Maulana Hasrat's scheme as to smaller provinces seems to be the only workable proposition. Under my scheme the Muslims will have four Muslim States: (1) The Pathan Province or the North-West Frontier, (2) Western Punjab, (3) Sindh, and (4) Eastern Bengal. If there are compact Muslim communities in any other part of India, sufficiently large to form a Province, they should be similarly constituted. . . . *This is not a united India. It means a . . . partition of India into a Muslim India and a non-Muslim India.*

(c) From a national point of view, I strongly object to any communal distinction being adopted for Government service or in the Universities. Yet it cannot be denied that Muslim dissatisfaction at the present condition of things is well-

founded and genuine. Hindus must make up their mind to concede to the Muslims their fair share of the loaves and fishes obtainable from Government. . . . What the Muslims of the Punjab (I say Muslims as distinguished from Muslim landlords, Muslim lawyers and Muslim graduates) stand in the greatest need of, is educational and economic openings. There are Muslim districts where illiteracy is more widespread than anywhere else in the Province. There are millions of Muslims who are exclusively at the mercy of their Muslim and Hindu landlords. What have the Muslim leaders done to improve their educational and economic position? Providing posts under the Government for a few educated Muslims is no remedy for the present condition. Safeguarding the interests of the few and neglecting the interests of the many is hardly a laudable thing, but that is exactly what Mian Fazl-i-Husain¹⁵ has achieved and at such tremendous cost! The Muslims all over the world have yet to learn that there are other ways of making money and thriving economically than through and by Muslim rule. Those who are doing nothing to place modern progressive ideals before the Muslims and simply emphasize ingenious dogmas, hair-splitting doctrines and reliance on Government, can hardly be called good friends of the Muslims. . . .

XII

In the last article I observed that Mian Fazl-i-Husain embodied, in his person, a real grievance. . . . If the Hindus occupy a larger number of posts under the Government than they would be entitled to on a purely numerical basis, they are not to be blamed for it. The Muslim community ought to recognise that the fault is principally their own. They did not take sufficient advantage of the educational facilities provided by the Government in the early days of the British rule. . . . The claim that the number of Government posts allotted to each community should be in proportion to its strength in the population, is equally absurd. . . . The whole thing is so ridiculous that one wonders how such a claim could be seriously put forward by men of intelligence and common-sense. . . .

I am free to confess that in the present state of communal feeling no Department should be monopolised by any one community or class. . . . I think the appointment of a properly representative Public Services Commission will be a sufficient guarantee that no community shall, in future, be improperly deprived of its due share of Government posts. I can think of no other solution which would meet the needs of the situation. When, however, Swarajya is attained, the solution will probably be simple. The Provincial Governments will have full powers to appoint their servants, and the Provinces having Muslim majorities will . . . automatically have a majority of Muslim Government servants. In the All-India Services, a Services Commission will continue to make appointments. . . . No community can economically prosper which relies too much on Government patronage. . . . The cream is, in any case, reserved for Europeans; then come Anglo-Indians; Indians come last of all.

As for Universities and other educational institutions, they are the last places where any communal distinction should be allowed. That will be poisoning the whole intellectual life of the nation. I can understand and appreciate special facilities being asked for classes considered backward. Give them special scholarships, open educational centres in areas largely occupied by such classes; even assign larger or special grants from public revenues for their benefit, without dislocating or injuring existing institutions. . . . The case is, however, different with the Professional Colleges. In their case the allocation of numbers to different communities regardless of merit would lower the standard of education and the subsequent efficiency of the successful units. These are, however, minor matters to which undue importance should not be attached.

Now to summarise the suggestions, I have made:

- (1) Free your minds from the pernicious doctrine of absolute rights.
- (2) Purge your politics of "religion" (dogmatic religion).
- (3) Rationalise religion as much as possible, and lay emphasis only on essentials.
- (4) Remove social barriers which separate and estrange one community from another.
- (5) Love India above any other country in the world, and be Indians first and last.
- (6) Concentrate all efforts on improving conditions at home. That does not debar you from sympathising with your fellow-religionists abroad and helping them occasionally provided that your duty to your own countrymen permits of it. In this respect follow Turkey and Egypt.
- (7) Don't fret at Shuddhi. It has come to stay.
- (8) You can try Sanghathan and Tanzim,¹⁶ if you can purge them of anti-Muslim and anti-Hindu feelings, which, in my opinion, is very difficult.
- (9) Have proportional representation in Legislature if you may, but do not insist on separate electorates.
- (10) Divide the Punjab into two Provinces to make majority rule effective.
- (11) Don't insist on population being the rule of representation in local bodies. But if you must, you may. But there, again, do not insist on separate electorates.
- (12) Have Public Service Commissions to regulate the filling of Government posts on certain general broad principles.
- (13) No communal representation in Universities and educational institutions. But special facilities for backward classes may be provided with special grants from public revenues. . . .

[From Lala Lajpat Rai, *Writings and Speeches*, vol. 2: 1920–1928, ed. Vijaya Chandra Joshi (Delhi: University Publishers, 1966), 170–171, 175–179, 203–208, 210–218.]

VINAYAK DAMODAR SAVARKAR: HINDU NATIONALIST

The tradition of Hindu nationalism begun by Tilak, Aurobindo, and Lajpat Rai was continued and given a more virulent, anti-Muslim form by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1883–1966). Born a Chitpavan Brahman like Ranade, Gokhale, and Tilak, Savarkar was the son of a landowner known for both his Sanskrit scholarship and his Western-style education. Two incidents from his youth presaged his lifelong antipathy to those he considered Hinduism's foes. At the age of ten, hearing of bloody Hindu–Muslim riots in the United Provinces, he led a gang of his schoolmates in a stone-throwing attack on the village mosque. At sixteen, his anger at the hanging of two Maharashtrian terrorists made him vow to devote his life to driving the British out of India.

On entering Fergusson College at Poona, Savarkar quickly organized a patriotic society among his fellow students. Through poems, articles, and speeches, he reminded them of India's glorious past and the need to regain her freedom. In 1905 he arranged for a huge bonfire of foreign cloth and persuaded Tilak to speak to the crowd gathered around it. For this he was expelled from his college. With Tilak's help, however, he secured from an Indian patriot in London a scholarship to study there, on the understanding that he would never enter government service.

From 1906 to 1910, in the guise of a student of law, the young Savarkar bearded the British lion in its den. His "New India" group learned the art of bomb-making from a Russian revolutionary in Paris, and planned the assassination of the hated Lord Curzon. One member of the group electrified London when he shot and killed an important official of the India Office and then went proudly to the gallows. Savarkar himself was arrested a few months later, but by this time he had already published his nationalistic interpretation of the 1857–1858 rebellion, *The Indian War of Independence of 1857* (1909).

When the ship carrying him back to India for trial stopped at Marseilles, Savarkar created an international incident by swimming ashore and claiming asylum on French soil. The Hague International Tribunal ultimately judged his recapture by the British authorities irregular but justifiable, but by this time he had already been twice sentenced to life imprisonment. In 1911 Savarkar was transported to the Andaman Islands (India's "Devil's Island" in the tropical Bay of Bengal), where he found his elder brother, a renowned terrorist, already there before him.

Agitation in India secured his release from confinement in 1924, but until 1937 his movements were restricted and he was forbidden to take part in politics. Nehru, Bose, and Roy sent him congratulatory messages on his return to the political arena, and the Hindu Mahasabha (founded in 1915, and revitalized in the early 1920s), the largest Hindu communal party, elected him as their president for seven consecutive years, until failing health forced him to resign.

Intending to unite and strengthen all Hindudom, Savarkar advocated the removal of intercaste barriers, the entry of Untouchables into orthodox temples, and the reconversion of Hindus who had become Muslims or Christians. During World War II he

propagated the slogan “Hinduize all politics and militarize Hindudom,” and urged Hindus to enlist in the armed forces in order to learn the arts of war.

Savarkar and Gandhi had disagreed from the time of their discussions in London in 1909 (discussions that may have helped to provoke the latter to write his famous *Hind Swaraj*, a pamphlet denouncing the evils of modern civilization). Savarkar now made no bones about his conviction that Gandhi’s doctrine of non-violence was “absolutely sinful.”¹⁷ As the fateful hour of independence from British rule drew near, Savarkar and the Mahasabha opposed the Muslim League’s demand for Pakistan, but maintained that Bengal and the Punjab should be divided into two provinces even if there was no partition of the whole country. Gandhi’s apparent vacillation on this issue and his post-Partition fasts for the protection of India’s Muslims and for goodwill toward Pakistan infuriated many of Savarkar’s followers. Early in 1948 one of them, to avenge what he felt was Gandhi’s betrayal of the Hindu cause, felled him with three pistol shots.

The assassin, N. V. Godse (see chapter 6), although no longer a member of the Mahasabha, was still known as a devoted lieutenant of Savarkar, who consequently had to stand trial with him. Acquitted because of lack of evidence linking him to the crime itself, but too ill to lead an active life, Savarkar returned under a cloud to his home in Bombay. In the 1950s he made speeches urging military preparedness, and until the last year of his life he issued statements and wrote books and articles.

The theory of Hindu national solidarity and political dominance evolved by Savarkar continued after independence to animate organizations such as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the Bharatiya Jan Sangh, and the Bharatiya Janata Party. Their appeal to patriotic, moral, and religious sentiments has given them considerable influence on the Indian political scene.

THE GLORIES OF THE HINDU NATION

Deprived of writing materials during his days of imprisonment, Savarkar scratched on the whitewashed walls of his cell and then committed to memory the notes for his treatise on Hindutva (“Hindu-ness”). In the final portion of this work, published in 1923, he proudly cited the geographical, racial, cultural, numerical, and religious ways in which the Hindu nation is superior to all other polities.

[I]t will not be out of place to see how far the attributes, which we found to be the essentials of Hindutva, contribute toward [the] strength, cohesion, and progress of our people. Do these essentials constitute a foundation so broad, so deep, so strong, that basing upon it the Hindu people can build a future which can face and repel the attacks of all the adverse winds that blow; or does the Hindu race stand on feet of clay? . . .

Have they not, these Himalayas, been standing there as one whose desires are satisfied—so they seemed to the Vedic bard—so they seem . . . today. You take up buckets and fill your trenches with water and call it [a] moat. Behold,

Varuna himself, with his one hand pushing continents aside, fills the gap by pouring seas on seas with the other! This Indian ocean . . . is our moat.

These are our frontier lines bringing within our reach the advantages of an inland as well as an insular country.

She is the richly endowed daughter of God—this our Motherland. Her rivers are deep and perennial. Her land is yielding to the plow and her fields are loaded with golden harvests. Her necessities of life are few and a genial nature yields them all almost for the asking. Rich in her fauna, rich in her flora, she knows she owes it all to the immediate source of light and heat—the sun. She covets not the icy lands; blessed be they and their frozen latitudes. If heat is at times “enervating” here, cold is at times benumbing there. If cold induces manual labor, heat removes much of its very necessity. . . . She loves to visit her ghats and watch her boats gliding down the Ganges, on her moonlit waters. With the plow, the peacocks, the lotus, the elephant, and the Gītā, she is willing to forego, if that must be, whatever advantage the colder latitudes enjoy. She knows she cannot have all her own way. Her gardens are green and shady, her granaries well stocked, her waters crystal, her flowers scented, her fruits juicy, and her herbs healing. Her brush is dipped in the colors of dawn and her flute resonant with the music of [Krishna’s playground] Gokul. Verily Hind is the richly endowed daughter of God. . . .

With the exception of [the] Chinese and perhaps the Americans, no people are gifted with a land that can equal in natural strength and richness the land of *Sindhustān*. A country, a common home, is the first important essential of stable strong nationality; and as of all countries in the world our country can hardly be surpassed by any in its capacity to afford a soil so specially fitted for the growth of a great nation; we Hindus, whose very first article of faith is the love we bear to the common Fatherland, have in that love the strongest talismanic tie that can bind close and keep a nation firm and enthuse and enable it to accomplish things greater than ever.

The second essential of *Hindutva* puts the estimate of our latent powers of national cohesion and greatness yet higher. No country in the world, with the exception of China again, is peopled by a race so homogeneous, yet so ancient and yet so strong both numerically and vitally. The Americans . . . are decidedly left behind. Mohammedans are no race nor are the Christians. They are a religious unit, yet neither a racial nor a national one. But we Hindus, if possible, are all the three put together and live under our ancient and common roof. The numerical strength of our race is an asset that cannot be too highly prized.

And culture? The English and the Americans feel they are kith and kin because they possess a Shakespeare in common. But not only a Kalidas or a Bhas [Vyasa], but Oh Hindus! ye possess a Ramayan and a Mahabharat in common—and the Vedas! . . . The Hindu counts his years not by centuries but by cycles—the Yug [age] and the Kalpa [eon]—and amazed asks: “O Lord of the line of Raghu [Rama], where has the kingdom of Ayodhya gone? O Lord of the line of Yadu [Krishna], where has Mathura gone!!” He does not attempt to rouse the

sense of self-importance so much as the sense of proportion, which is Truth. And that has perhaps made him last longer than Ramses and Nebuchadnezzar. . . . A people that had produced an unending galaxy of heroes and heroworshippers and who are conscious of having fought with and vanquished the forces whose might struck Greece and Rome, the Pharaohs and the Incas, dead, have in their history a guarantee of their future greatness more assuring than any other people on earth yet possess.

But besides culture the tie of common holyland has at times proved stronger than the chains of a Motherland. Look at the Mohamedans. Mecca to them is a sterner reality than Delhi or Agra. Some of them do not make any secret of being bound to sacrifice all India if that be to the glory of Islam or [if it] could save the city of their prophet. Look at the Jews. Neither centuries of prosperity nor sense of gratitude for the shelter they found can make them more attached or even equally attached to the several countries they inhabit. Their love is, and must necessarily be, divided between the land of their birth and the land of their prophets. If the Zionists' dreams are ever realized—if Palestine becomes a Jewish state . . . it will gladden us almost as much as our Jewish friends—they, like the Mohamedans, would naturally set the interests of their holyland above those of their Motherlands in America and Europe. . . . The Crusades again, attest to the wonderful influence that a common holyland exercises over peoples widely separated in race, nationality, and language, to bind and hold them together. The ideal conditions, therefore, under which a nation can attain perfect solidarity and cohesion would, other things being equal, be found in the case of those people who inhabit the land they adore, the land of whose forefathers is also the land of their Gods and Angels, of Seers and Prophets; the scenes of whose history are also the scenes of their mythology.

The Hindus are about the only people who are blessed with these ideal conditions that are at the same time incentive to national solidarity, cohesion, and greatness. . . . Only Arabia and Palestine—if ever the Jews can succeed in founding their state there—can be said to possess this unique advantage. But Arabia is incomparably poorer in the natural, cultural, historical, and numerical essentials of a great people; and even if the dreams of the Zionists are ever realized into a Palestine state still they too must be equally lacking in these.

England, France, Germany, Italy, Turkey proper, Persia, Japan, Afghanistan, [the] Egypt of today (for the old descendants of "Punto" and their Egypt is dead long since)—and other African states, Mexico, Peru, Chilly [Chile] (not to mention states and nations lesser than all these)—though racially more or less homogeneous, are yet less advantageously situated than we are in geographical, cultural, historical, and numerical essentials, besides lacking the unique gift of a sanctified Motherland. Of the remaining nations Russia in Europe, and the United States in America, though geographically equally well-gifted with us, are yet poorer, in almost every other requisite of nationality. China alone of the present comity of nations is almost as richly gifted with the geographical, racial,

cultural . . . essentials as the Hindus are. Only in the possession of a common, a sacred, and a perfect language, the Sanskrit, and a sanctified Motherland, we are so far [as] the essentials that contribute to national solidarity . . . more fortunate.

Thus the actual essentials of *Hindutva* are, as this running sketch reveals, also the ideal essentials of nationality. If we would we can build on this foundation of *Hindutva*, a future greater than what any other people on earth can dream of—greater even than our own past; provided we are able to utilize our opportunities! For let our people remember that great combinations are the order of the day. The leagues of nations, the alliances of powers, Pan-Islamism, Pan-Slavism, Pan-Ethiopism—all little beings are seeking to get themselves incorporated into greater wholes, so as to be better fitted for the struggle for existence and power. . . . Woe to those who have them already as their birthright and know them not; or worse, despise them! The nations of the world are desperately trying to find a place in this or that combination for aggression:—can any one of you, Oh Hindus! whether Jain or Samāji¹⁸ or Sanātani¹⁹ or Sīkh or any other subsection, afford to cut yourselves off or fall out and destroy the ancient, the natural, and the organic combination that already exists?—a combination that is bound not by any scraps of paper nor by the ties of exigencies alone, but by the ties of blood and birth and culture? Strengthen them if you can; pull down the barriers that have survived their utility, of castes and customs, of sects and sections. What of interdining? But [let] intermarriages between provinces and provinces, castes and castes, be encouraged where they do not exist. But where they already exist as between the Sīkhs and Sanātanies, Jains and Vaishnavas, Lingayats and Non-Lingayats—suicidal be the hand that tries to cut the nuptial tie. Let the minorities remember they would be cutting the very branch on which they stand. Strengthen every tie that binds you to the main organism, whether of blood or language or common festivals and feasts or culture love you bear to the common Motherland. Let this ancient and noble stream of Hindu blood flow from vein to vein . . . till at last the Hindu people get fused and welded into an indivisible whole, till our race gets consolidated and strong and sharp as steel. . . .

Thirty crores of people, with India for their basis of operation, for their Fatherland and for their Holyland . . . bound together by ties of a common blood and common culture can dictate their terms to the whole world. . . .

Equally certain it is that whenever the Hindus come to hold such a position whence they could dictate terms to the whole world—those terms cannot be very different from the terms which [the] Gītā dictates or the Buddha lays down. A Hindu is most intensely so, when he ceases to be a Hindu; and with a Kabir claims the whole earth for a Benares . . . or with a Tukaram exclaims: “My country? Oh brothers, the limits of the Universe—there the frontiers of my country lie.”

[From V. D. Savarkar, *Hindutva*, 4th ed.
(Poona: S. P. Gokhale, 1949), 108–116.]

MUHAMMAD IQBAL: POLITICAL SPOKESMAN FOR INDIA'S MUSLIMS

The poetic and philosophical Iqbal has been presented in chapter 5. Here, in this second set of readings from Iqbal, his political views are set forth. Iqbal's interest in politics grew out of his concern for the future of his community. He was elected to the Punjab provincial legislature in 1926 and took part in its debates, but made no great mark as a legislator. Temperamentally, he was not suited to politics, and his real contributions in this field were in the realm of ideas. Although his thoughts on a separate state within India for Muslims aroused no immediate response, this was the first time they had been put forward from the platform of a political party.

A SEPARATE STATE FOR MUSLIMS WITHIN INDIA

Iqbal's presidential address before the All-India Muslim League in Allahabad on December 29, 1930, is his most important political statement in relation to the later establishment of a separate state for the Muslims of India in those areas where they were in the majority. His argument is that a polity that makes religion a purely private matter, as in European states, dooms religion to irrelevance. Islam, on the other hand, is organically connected with the social order and in India needs an autonomous area for its full expression and development.

It cannot be denied that Islam, regarded as an ethical ideal plus a certain kind of polity—by which expression I mean a social structure regulated by a legal system and animated by a specific ethical ideal—has been the chief formative factor in the life-history of the Muslims of India. It has furnished those basic emotions and loyalties which gradually unify scattered individuals and groups and finally transform them into a well-defined people. Indeed it is no exaggeration to say that India is perhaps the only country in the world where Islam, as a people-building force, has worked at its best. In India, as elsewhere, the structure of Islam as a society is almost entirely due to the working of Islam as a culture inspired by a specific ethical ideal. What I mean to say is that Muslim society, with its remarkable homogeneity and inner unity, has grown to be what it is under the pressure of the laws and institutions associated with the culture of Islam. The ideas set free by European thinking, however, are now rapidly changing the outlook of the present generation of Muslims both in India and outside India. . . .

The conclusion to which Europe is . . . driven is that religion is a private affair of the individual and has nothing to do with what is called man's temporal life. Islam does not bifurcate the unity of man into an irreconcilable duality of spirit and matter. In Islam, God and the universe, spirit and matter, church and state, are organic to each other. Man is not the citizen of a profane world to be renounced in the interest of a world of spirit situated elsewhere. To Islam matter

is spirit realising itself in space and time. . . . In the world of Islam we have a universal polity whose fundamentals are believed to have been revealed, but whose structure, owing to our legists' want of contact with [the] modern world, stands today in need of renewed power by fresh adjustments. I do not know what will be the final fate of the national idea in the world of Islam. . . .

What, then, is the problem and its implications? Is religion a private affair? Would you like to see Islam, as a moral and political ideal, meeting the same fate in the world of Islam as Christianity has already met in Europe? Is it possible to retain Islam as an ethical ideal and to reject it as a polity in favor of national politics, in which a religious attitude is not permitted to play any part? This question becomes of special importance in India where the Muslims happen to be in a minority. The proposition that religion is a private individual experience is not surprising on the lips of a European. In Europe the conception of Christianity as a monastic order, renouncing the world of matter and fixing its gaze entirely on the world of spirit led, by a logical process of thought, to the view embodied in this proposition. The nature of the Prophet's religious experience, as disclosed in the *Qur'ān*, however, is wholly different. It is not mere experience in the sense of a purely biological event, happening inside the experient and necessitating no reactions on his social environment. It is individual experience creative of a social order. Its immediate outcome is the fundamentals of a polity with implicit legal concepts whose civic significance cannot be belittled merely because their origin is revelational. The religious ideal of Islam, therefore, is organically related to the social order which it has created. The rejection of the one will eventually involve the rejection of the other. Therefore the construction of a polity on national lines, if it means a displacement of the Islamic principle of solidarity, is simply unthinkable to a Muslim. This is a matter which at the present moment directly concerns the Muslims of India. . . . The unity of an Indian nation, therefore, must be sought, not in the negation but in the mutual harmony and cooperation of the many. . . .

Events seem to be tending in the direction of some sort of internal harmony. And as far as I have been able to read the Muslim mind, I have no hesitation in declaring that if the principle that the Indian Muslim is entitled to full and free development on the lines of his own culture and tradition in his own Indian home-lands is recognised as the basis of a permanent communal settlement, he will be ready to stake his all for the freedom of India. The principle that each group is entitled to free development on its own lines is not inspired by any feeling of narrow communalism. There are communalisms and communalisms. A community which is inspired by feelings of ill-will toward other communities is low and ignoble. I entertain the highest respect for the customs, laws, religions, and social institutions of other communities. Nay, it is my duty according to the teaching of the *Qur'ān*, even to defend their places of worship, if need be. Yet I love the communal group which is the source of my life and behavior and which has formed me [into] what I am by giving me its religion, its literature, its

thought, its culture and thereby recreating its whole past as a living factor in my present consciousness. . . .

Communalism in its higher aspect, then, is indispensable to the formation of a harmonious whole in a country like India. The units of Indian society are not territorial as in European countries. India is a continent of human groups belonging to different races, speaking different languages and professing different religions. Their behavior is not at all determined by a common race-consciousness. Even the Hindus do not form a homogeneous group. The principle of European democracy cannot be applied to India without recognizing the fact of communal groups. The Muslim demand for the creation of a Muslim India within India is, therefore, perfectly justified. The [1929] resolution of the All-Parties Muslim Conference at Delhi, is, to my mind, wholly inspired by this noble ideal of a harmonious whole which, instead of stifling the respective individualities of its component wholes, affords them chances of fully working out the possibilities that may be latent in them. . . . I would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single State. Self-government within the British empire or without the British empire, the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims, at least of North-West India. . . .

The idea need not alarm the Hindus or the British. India is the greatest Muslim country in the world. The life of Islam, as a cultural force, in this country very largely depends on its centralisation in a specified territory. This centralisation of the most living portion of the Muslims of India, whose military and police service has, notwithstanding unfair treatment from the British, made the British rule possible in this country, will eventually solve the problem of India as well as of Asia. It will intensify their sense of responsibility and deepen their patriotic feeling. Thus possessing full opportunity of development within the body politic of India, the North-West India Muslims will prove the best defenders of India against a foreign invasion, be the invasion one of ideas or of bayonets. . . .

I therefore demand the formation of a consolidated Muslim State in the best interests of India and Islam. For India it means security and peace resulting from an internal balance of power; for Islam an opportunity to rid itself of the stamp that Arabian imperialism was forced to give it, to mobilize its law, its education, its culture, and to bring them into closer contact with its own original spirit and with the spirit of modern times.

Thus it is clear that in view of India's infinite variety in climates, races, languages, creeds and social systems, the creation of autonomous States based on the unity of language, race, history, religion and identity of economic interests, is the only possible way to secure a stable constitutional structure in India. . . .

In conclusion I cannot but impress upon you that the present crisis in the history of India demands complete organization and unity of will and purpose in the Muslim community. . . . Our disorganized condition has already confused political issues vital to the life of the community. . . . Is it possible for you

to achieve the organic wholeness of a unified will? Yes, it is. Rise above sectional interests and private ambitions, and learn to determine the value of your individual and collective action, however directed on material ends, in the light of the ideal which you are supposed to represent. Pass from matter to spirit. Matter is diversity; spirit is light, life and unity. One lesson I have learnt from the history of Muslims. At critical moments in their history it is Islam that has saved Muslims and not vice versa. If today you focus your vision on Islam and see inspiration from the ever-vitalizing idea embodied in it, you will be only reassembling your scattered forces, regaining your lost integrity, and thereby saving yourself from total destruction. One of the profoundest verses in the Holy Qur'ān teaches us that the birth and rebirth of the whole of humanity is like the birth of a single individual. Why cannot you who, as a people, can well claim to be the first practical exponents of this superb conception of humanity, live and move and have your being as a single individual? . . . In the words of the Qur'ān: "Hold fast to yourself; no one who erreth can hurt you, provided you are well guided" [5:104].

[From Iqbal, "Presidential Address," in *Speeches and Statements*, ed. Latif Ahmad Sherwani, 2nd ed. (Lahore: Al-Manar Academy, 1948), 3–6, 8–13, 15, 34–36.]

LETTERS TO JINNAH

Toward the end of his life Iqbal became convinced that the Muslims in India were threatened with extermination. He called the endless succession of Hindu–Muslim riots a virtual civil war, which he foresaw would develop in magnitude as time progressed. Feeling that the Muslim community was unprepared for a final showdown, ill-organized and without a leader, he singled out Jinnah as the one person capable of uniting the Muslim community. In several letters to Jinnah in the 1937, Iqbal called upon him to bring together all Indian Muslims and look to the interests of the Muslim masses as well as to their elites. He believed that the Muslims needed a separate federation of Muslim provinces and a return to a purer Islam to ensure their survival and their betterment.

20th March, 1937

My dear Mr. Jinnah,

. . . I believe you are also aware that the new constitution has at least brought a unique opportunity to Indian Muslims for self-organisation in view of the future political developments both in India and Muslim Asia. While we are ready to co-operate with other progressive parties in the country, we must not ignore the fact that the whole future of Islam as a moral and political force in Asia rests very largely on a complete organisation of Indian Muslims. . . . You should immediately hold an All-India Muslim Convention in Delhi to which you should invite members of the

new Provincial Assemblies as well as other prominent Muslim leaders. To this convention you must restate as clearly and as strongly as possible the political objective of the Indian Muslims as a distinct political unit in the country. It is absolutely necessary to tell the world both inside and outside India that the economic problem is not the only problem in the country. From the Muslim point of view the cultural problem is of much greater consequence to most Indian Muslims. At any rate it is not less important than the economic problem. If you could hold this convention, it would test the credentials of those Muslim legislators who have formed parties contrary to the aims and aspiration of Indian Muslims. It would further make it clear to the Hindus that no political device, however subtle, can make the Indian Muslim lose sight of his cultural entity.

[From G. Allanda, ed., *Pakistan Movement: Historic Documents* (Karachi: Paradise Subscription Agency, 1967), 140–141.]

28th May, 1937

My dear Mr. Jinnah,

Thank you so much for your letter. . . . The League will have to finally decide whether it will remain a body representing the upper classes of Indian Muslims or Muslim masses who have so far, with good reason, taken no interest in it. Personally I believe that a political organisation which gives no promise of improving the lot of the average Muslim cannot attract our masses.

Under the new constitution the higher posts go to the sons of upper classes; the smaller go to the friends or relatives of the ministers, in other matters too our political institutions have never thought of improving the lot of Muslims generally. The problem of bread is becoming more and more acute. The Muslim has begun to feel that he has been going down and down during the last 200 years. Ordinarily he believes that his poverty is due to Hindu money-lending or capitalism. The perception that equality [is] due to foreign rule has not yet fully come to him . . . The question therefore is: how is it possible to solve the problem of Muslim poverty? And the whole future of the League depends on the League's activity to solve this question. If the League can give no such promises I am sure the Muslim masses will remain indifferent to it as before. Happily there is a solution in the enforcement of the Law of Islam and its further development in the light of modern ideas. After a long and careful study of Islamic Law I have come to the conclusion that if this system of law is properly understood and applied, at least the right to subsistence is secured to everybody. But the enforcement and development of the Shariat of Islam is impossible in this country without a free Muslim state or states. . . . I still believe this to be the only way to solve the problem of bread for Muslims as well as to secure a peaceful India. If such a thing is

impossible in India the only other alternative is a civil war which as a matter of fact has been going on for some time in the shape of Hindu–Muslim riots. I fear that in certain parts of the country, e.g., N.W. India, Palestine may be repeated. . . . For Islam the acceptance of social democracy in some suitable form and consistent with the legal principles of Islam is not a revolution but a return to the original purity of Islam. The modern problems therefore are far more easy to solve for the Muslims than for the Hindus. But as I have said above in order to make it possible for Muslim India to solve the problems it is necessary to redistribute the country and to provide one or more Muslim states with absolute majorities. Don't you think that the time for such a demand has already arrived?

[From G. Allanda, ed., *Pakistan Movement*, 143–144.]

June 1st, 1937

My dear Mr. Jinnah,

Thank you so much for your letter . . . you are the only Muslim in India today to whom the community has a right to look up for safe guidance through the storm which is coming to North-West India and perhaps to the whole of India. I tell you that we are actually living in a state of civil war which, but for the police and military, would become universal in no time. During the last few months there has been a series of Hindu–Muslim riots in India. In North-West India alone there have been at least three riots during the last three months and at least four cases of vilification of the Prophet by Hindus and Sikhs. In each of these four cases, the vilifier has been murdered. There have also been cases of burning of the Qur'ān in Sind. I have carefully studied the whole situation and believe that the real cause of these events is neither religious nor economic. It is purely political, i.e., the desire of the Sikhs and Hindus to intimidate Muslims even in the Muslim majority provinces. And the new constitution is such that even in the Muslim majority provinces, the Muslims are made entirely dependent on non-Muslims. The result is that the Muslim Ministry can take no proper action and are even driven to do injustice to Muslims partly to please those on whom they depend, and partly to show that they are absolutely impartial. Thus it is clear that we have our specific reasons to reject this constitution. It seems to me that the new constitution is devised only to placate the Hindus. In the Hindu majority provinces, the Hindus have of course absolute majorities, and can ignore Muslims altogether. In Muslim majority provinces, the Muslims are made entirely dependent on Hindus. I have no doubt in my mind that this constitution is calculated to do infinite harm to the Indian Muslims. Apart from this it is no solution of the economic problem which is so acute among Muslims.

The only thing that the communal award grants to Muslims is the recognition of their political existence in India. But such a recognition granted

to a people whom this constitution does not and cannot help in solving their problem of poverty can be of no value to them. The Congress President has denied the political existence of Muslims in no unmistakable terms. The other Hindu political body, i.e., the Mahasabha, whom I regard as the real representative of the masses of the Hindus, has declared more than once that a united Hindu-Muslim nation is impossible in India. In these circumstances it is obvious that the only way to a peaceful India is a redistribution of the country on the lines of racial, religious and linguistic affinities. . . .

To my mind the new constitution with its idea of a single Indian federation is completely hopeless. A separate federation of Muslim provinces, reformed on the lines I have suggested above, is the only course by which we can secure a peaceful India and save Muslims from the domination of non-Muslims. Why should not the Muslims of North-West India and Bengal be considered as nations entitled to self-determination just as other nations in India and outside India are?

[From G. Allanda, ed., *Pakistan Movement*, 145–146.]

CHOUDHARY RAHMAT ALI: GIVING A NAME TO PAKISTAN

There has been considerable controversy over the origin and meaning of the word “Pakistan.” It was first widely used after the Lahore Resolution of 1940, when newspapers hostile to Jinnah began saying that he wanted to divide the country into “India” and “Pakistan.” Jinnah commented that neither he nor the Muslim League had invented the word, but that it had been foisted upon them by the Hindus and the British. He went on to say that he was grateful that they had done so, for he had wanted a word to cover what was being asked for in the Lahore Resolution. As he pointed out, “Some young fellows in London, who wanted a particular part of the northwest to be separated from the rest of India, coined a name, started the idea, and called a zone Pakistan.”²⁰ One of the “young fellows” was Choudhary Rahmat Ali, a student at Cambridge who, with a group of friends, issued a manifesto in 1933 on behalf of the Muslim population of Punjab, the Northwest Frontier Province, Kashmir, Sindh, and Baluchistan in what they called a “grim and fateful struggle against political crucifixion and annihilation” by the Hindu majority.²¹

“THE FATHERLAND OF THE PAK NATION”

In an essay written some years later, Rahmat Ali tells how the name was chosen.

In my early youth three fundamental truths became clear to me about the future of our people and our lands. First, that such old names of our “Indian” homelands

as the Sindh Valley, the Indus Valley, and North-Western India, were anachronistic and dangerous. They were anachronistic because they were the relics both of a mythology which we exploded in the 7th century a. d. [sic] and of a hegemony which we annihilated in the 8th; and they were dangerous because they made . . . our “Indian” homelands Hindooslands and our people Indian—which they had ceased to be at least twelve centuries ago. So, to my mind, these names were our worst enemies; for through them the ghosts of dead ages and of defunct hegemonies were still ruling us and ruining our nationhood in our own country.

Second, that in the modern world the recognition of our nationhood was impossible without a national name for our people and our “Indian” homelands—a name which would equally serve and suit after the reintegration of our “Indian” and “Asian” homelands[,] a reintegration which in my judgment was both vital and inevitable; that the absence of such a name, in the past, had proved harmful to our interests, but, in the future, would prove fatal to our existence. For, more than anything else, it would encourage the Caste Hindoos—and others . . . to suck into the orbit of Indianism not only our “Indian” homelands but also our “Asian” homelands—Iran, Afghanistan, and Tukharistan.

Third, that unless and until we all in our “Indian” and “Asian” homelands, now separated by the twists and turns of history and exploited by our enemies, reintegrate ourselves into one nation under a new fraternal name, none of us whether living in the “Indian” or in the “Asian” homelands could survive and thrive in the world.

The realization of these truths created in me a solemn, surging urge to invent such a name as would reflect the soul and spirit of us all, symbolize the history and hopes of us all, strengthen the national bonds of us all, and ensure the realization of the destiny of us all. That is, a name that would detach those of us who are living in our “Indian” homelands from Indian Nationalism and re-attach us to Islamic nationalism; that would sever our artificial, national and territorial bonds with India and cement our Islamic, national and territorial ties with Iran, Afghanistan, and Tukharistan; and that would meet the challenge of Indianism and British Imperialism both to us in our Indian homelands and to our brethren in Iran, Afghanistan and Tukharistan.

It had therefore to be a name born of all the elements of our life—spiritual and fraternal, moral and ethical, historical and geographical, supra-regional and supra-national. In other words, it had to be charged with an irresistible, eternal appeal to the heart and head of all our people, and possessed of elemental power to seize on our being and make us all go out crusading for the Millat’s [Muslim community’s] Mission. For nothing short of that could generate those mighty forces which alone could ensure the liberation of us all, the transformation of some of the most important parts of India and Asia, and the fulfilment of our Millat’s Mission in India and its Islands. . . .

I . . . prayed for Allah’s guidance. I did everything that could help the accomplishment of the task, and never lost faith in Divine guidance. I carried on till,

at last, in His dispensation Allah showed me the light, and led me to the name “Pakistan” and to the Pak Plan, both of which are now animating the lives of our people.

So much for the invention of the name Pakistan. Now a word about its composition.

“Pakistan” is both a Persian and an Urdu word. It is composed of letters taken from the names of all our homelands—“Indian” and “Asian.” That is, Punjab, Afghanistan (North-West Frontier Province), Kashmir, Iran, Sindh (including Kachch and Kathiawar), Tukharistan, Afghanistan, and Balochistan. It means the land of the Paks—the spiritually pure and clean. It symbolizes the religious beliefs and the ethnical stocks of our people; and it stands for all the territorial constituents of our original Fatherland. It has no other origin and no other meaning; and it does not admit of any other interpretation. Those writers who have tried to interpret it in more than one way have done so either through love of casuistry, or through ignorance of its inspiration, origin, and composition.

[Choudhary Rahmat Ali, *Pakistan: The Fatherland of the Pak Nation* (1947),
quoted in Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, *Evolution of Pakistan*
(Lahore: All-Pakistan Legal Decisions, 1963), 28–32.]

MUHAMMAD ALI JINNAH: FOUNDER OF PAKISTAN

The long and eventful life of Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1875–1948) began and ended in the city of Karachi, in a predominantly Muslim area on the Arabian Sea.²² His parents had moved there from the Kathiawar Peninsula of Gujarat to the southeast, and so their eldest son shared with his chief political rival, M. K. Gandhi, a common heritage of ancestral life in that highly political peninsula. Jinnah’s father was a restless and ambitious man. Trade drew him to Karachi and enabled him to become one of that city’s leading businessmen. He sent his son Muhammad Ali to a Muslim-managed school with classes in English, had him married, then sent him to England for further education at the age of sixteen. Young Jinnah arrived in London to start his studies the year after Gandhi finished his own legal studies and left for home.

Jinnah’s legal studies in London developed his keen mind, and the parliamentary elections of 1892 aroused his fighting instincts. Dadabhai Naoroji, the elder statesman of the Congress, ran for Parliament that year in a workingman’s district in London on the Liberal ticket. When the Tory prime minister, Lord Salisbury, insulted him with a racial slur, Jinnah joined other Indian students in working for Naoroji’s campaign, which was victorious. Meanwhile, Jinnah’s mother and wife had died, and when he returned to Karachi in 1896 he found his father deep in business troubles. Rather than go into practice there, where his family had numerous friends, the young lawyer insisted on enrolling as a barrister at the Bombay High Court, where he could work his way up through his own resources. After three lean years, Jinnah’s abilities began to receive favorable attention from British officials: first the acting advocate-general, then

the head of the judicial administration, and in 1903 the president of the Bombay municipality, who hired him as its attorney. Nattily dressed after the latest English fashion, he gradually became an independent, wealthy, and highly respected member of the Bombay bar. Jinnah's upright character and forthright manner made a lasting impression on the legal community in that sophisticated city.²³

Once established in his chosen profession, Jinnah began to take an interest in political matters. He joined the Moderate wing of the Congress, attended its annual sessions, and in 1906 acted as the personal secretary of Dadabhai Naoroji, Congress president for that year (see chapter 4). In 1909 the Bombay Presidency's Muslim constituency elected him to the Imperial Legislative Council at Calcutta, where his ability and independence soon won him recognition. He now came into close contact with his fellow legislator from Bombay, G. K. Gokhale (see chapter 4), and a warm friendship grew up between the two men. Both were dedicated to gradually improving the lot of the Indian people through constitutional means. Each admired the other: Jinnah aspired to become "the Muslim Gokhale," and Gokhale called Jinnah "the best ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity."²⁴

Jinnah did in fact serve as such an ambassador during the second decade of the twentieth century by joining the Muslim League in 1913 (at the suggestion of Mohamed Ali [see chapter 6]), and working in both Congress and League to bring the two bodies to agree in 1916 to a common national demand for India's self-government within the British Empire. This represented a great change for the Muslim League, and to bring it about Jinnah persuaded Tilak, then president of the Congress, to accept the League's principle that Muslims should continue to be protected from Hindu domination by the three major constitutional safeguards created in 1909 by the British Parliament. These were: separate seats in the provincial and central legislatures, reserved for Muslim legislators only; a somewhat greater proportion of seats than the percentage of Muslims in the total electorate; and the election of Muslim legislators by Muslims alone. This so-called communal electorate was subsequently attacked by Hindus who feared being underrepresented in the legislatures, and it remained a source of bitter controversy for the next thirty years. Jinnah's argument for it resembled Lincoln's defense of majority rule in his First Inaugural Address: for a democracy to function, there should be no permanent majority, but always the possibility that the minority could attract enough support to become a majority.

Jinnah's masterful debating powers were described by Britain's cabinet officer, Secretary of State for India Edwin Montagu, after their 1917 meeting: "They were followed by Jinnah, young, perfectly mannered, impressive looking, armed to the teeth with dialectics. . . . I was rather tired and I funk'd him. Chelmsford [the Viceroy] tried to argue with him, and was tied up into knots. Jinnah is a very clever man, and it is, of course, an outrage that such a man should have no chance of running the affairs of his own country."²⁵

The years after the end of World War I saw the rise of Gandhi as the leader of the national movement. Jinnah, however, had no use for the new techniques of non-cooperation and civil disobedience, nor had he much liking for the defense of the prewar

status of the Ottoman caliph, which Gandhi and Mohamed Ali were making the basis for Hindu–Muslim unity. The unrealistic aims of this movement, the unqualified acceptance of Gandhi’s leadership, and the confidence that the mere withdrawal of the British would enable Hindus and Muslims to settle their differences all struck Jinnah as dangerous for the future of the country.

Gandhi’s movement for achieving brotherhood between India’s two major religious communities through popular anti-government agitation did prove unrealistic. Nevertheless it displaced Jinnah from his role as mediator between the Congress and the League. Jinnah tried again in 1927 to forge an agreement on a constitutional demand, proposing that the Muslims give up their right to a separate electorate if the Congress would grant them 33 percent of the seats in the national legislature. (At that time they formed 26 percent of the inhabitants of the British-ruled provinces.) Gandhi opposed the plan and wrote, “no special legislation without a change of heart can possibly bring about organic unity,”²⁶ and the Muslim League split over the issue, leaving Jinnah in political limbo. To add to his troubles, his second wife, a beautiful young Parsi, died at a time when the couple had had a painful separation.

In 1931 Jinnah decided to withdraw completely from India’s problems, and settled down to a lucrative law practice in London. Two years later Liaquat Ali Khan (later Pakistan’s first prime minister; see chapter 9) urged him to return to India to lead the Muslims and the Muslim League. Jinnah waited for evidence of greater support; when it was forthcoming, he sold his house in London, and in 1935 moved back to Bombay. Parliament’s enactment of a new constitution for the governing of India in that year accelerated the tempo of political life, for it enlarged the suffrage from 4 to 10 percent and made the provinces virtually self-governing. The Muslim League fared badly in the elections, however, while the Congress, led by Nehru, captured majorities in six of British India’s eleven provinces. At this point Muhammad Iqbal, whose life was nearing its end, wrote Jinnah advising him to turn the League into a body representing the Muslim masses, and to demand the creation of “a free Muslim state or states” in order to ensure the survival and development of Islamic culture and law.

From 1936 to 1946 Jinnah worked tirelessly in province after province to recruit Muslims into the League, so that it could become what it claimed to be: their sole representative. He accused the Congress of anti-Muslim activities, and declared it was a “day of deliverance” for Muslims when the Congress provincial governments resigned in 1939 (in protest against not being consulted when the viceroy declared India at war with Germany). Not until 1940 did he embrace Iqbal’s idea of a separate Muslim polity. He then had the League adopt as its goal the establishment of “independent states” in the northwestern and eastern parts of India, where Muslims formed the majority of the population.

While the entire Congress cadre remained in jail from 1942 to 1945, Jinnah continued to build and organize the Muslim League. As a result, in the central and provincial elections of 1945–1946 it won 460 out of the 533 seats reserved for Muslims. Jinnah’s case for Pakistan was now very strong, although the British, the Congress, and some Muslim religious groups remained reluctant to grant it. He now took the momentous step in mid-August 1946 of calling for Muslims to resort to “direct action” to

gain their hoped-for national homeland. "This day we bid good-bye to constitutional methods," he declared.²⁷ His opponents accused him of unleashing a tide of blood, as killings—of Hindus and Sikhs by Muslims, of Muslims by Hindus and Sikhs—spread across the plains of eastern, northern, and northwestern India. To stop this violence, in the following year the new viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, persuaded the Congress, League, Sikh, and princely leaders to agree that India should undergo a surgical operation—partition into Hindu- and Muslim-majority areas—as soon as possible.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah assumed power at Karachi as governor-general of Pakistan on August 14, 1947. Already ill, he wore himself out trying to meet the new nation's most pressing problems: a shortage of administrative personnel; an influx of millions of refugees into West Pakistan; a war with India over Kashmir; hunger, disease, and poverty. Amidst all these trials, the task of framing a constitution receded into the background. Unfortunately for the land he had worked so hard to see established, and for those Muslims who had hailed him as their *Quaid-e Azam* (the Great Leader), he died in September 1948.

*"WE HAVE TO LIVE TOGETHER . . . WE HAVE
TO WORK TOGETHER"*

At the 1928 All Parties National Convention in Calcutta, Jinnah made a strong plea for constitutional guarantees to protect the Muslim minority. At the time he was clearly hoping for unity between Hindus and Muslims, but after all but one of the resolutions he introduced on behalf of the Muslim League were voted down by large majorities, he left the convention. As he boarded the train for Delhi, he said to a Parsi friend, "This is the parting of the ways."²⁸

The Report of the Committee which you appointed has already been read out and placed before you. I am exceedingly sorry that the Report of the Committee is neither helpful nor fruitful in any way whatsoever. I am sure, gentlemen, that you all realize that the present moment is very critical and vital to the interest not only of the Musalmans, but to the whole of India. I think it will be recognized that it is absolutely essential to our progress that Hindu-Muslim Settlement should be reached, and that all communities should live in a friendly and harmonious spirit in this vast country of ours. . . . I am sure you will . . . consider the present situation in which we are working and struggling for freedom and record your vote in favour of [the] modifications proposed, which, I have said before, are . . . reasonable and . . . enable us to triumph in our cause.

[From *The Proceedings of the All Parties National Convention*
(Allahabad: Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, Secretary, All Parties National
Convention, 1929), 78–79.]

Every country struggling for freedom and desirous of establishing a democratic system of Government has had to face the problem of minorities wherever they

existed and no constitution, however idealistic it may be, and however perfect from [a] theoretical point of view it may seem will ever receive the support of the minorities unless they can feel that they, as an entity, are secured under the proposed constitution and government and whether a constitution will succeed or not must necessarily depend as a matter of acid test [on] whether the minorities are in fact secure. Otherwise no proper constitution will last but result in a revolution and a civil war. . . .

We are here, as I understand, for the purpose of entering into [a] solemn contract and all parties who enter into it will have to work for it and fight for it together. What we want is that Hindus and Musalmans should march together until our object is obtained. . . . Do you want or do you not want Muslim India to go along with you? You must remember [that] the two major communities in India—I say this without the slightest disrespect to the other communities like Sikhs, Christians, and Parsis—are the Hindus and Musalmans and naturally therefore these two communities have got to be reconciled and united and made to feel that their interests are common and they are marching together for a common goal. . . . I am asking for this adjustment [giving Muslims one-third of the seats in the national legislature, keeping residuary powers in the provinces rather than in the central government, along with other safeguards] because I think it is the best and fair to the Musalmans. Look at the constitutional history of Canada and Egypt. The minorities are always afraid of majorities. The majorities are apt to be tyrannical and oppressive, particularly religious majorities, and the minorities therefore have a right to be absolutely secured. Was the adjustment between French Canadians and British [Canadians] arrived at on [a] population basis or on the ground of pure equity? Was the adjustment between the Coptic Christians and Musalmans in Egypt regulated by such considerations? . . .

If you do not settle this question today, we shall have to settle it tomorrow, but in the meantime our national interests are bound to suffer. We are all sons of this land. We have to live together. We have to work together and whatever our differences may be let us at any rate not create more bad blood. If we cannot agree, let us at any rate agree to differ but let us part as friends. I once more repeat. Believe me there is no progress for India until the Musalmans and Hindus are united and let no logic, philosophy or squabble stand in the way of our coming to a compromise and nothing will make me more happy than to see the Hindu Muslim Union.

[From *The Proceedings of the All Parties National Convention*, 92–95.]

HINDUS AND MUSLIMS: TWO SEPARATE NATIONS

The following selection is taken from Jinnah's most famous speech, his presidential address to the annual meeting of the Muslim League at Lahore in March 1940. It is the clearest statement of "the two-nation theory," that is, the claim that Hindus and Muslims were more than two religions—they were two nations. At the conclusion of

this speech the great gathering passed what became known as the Lahore Resolution. It stated that “no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims” unless it was recognized that “the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority . . . should be grouped to constitute ‘Independent States’ in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.”

The British government and Parliament, and more so the British nation, have been for many decades past brought up and nurtured with settled notions about India’s future, based on developments in their own country which has built up the British constitution, functioning now through the Houses of Parliament and the system of cabinet. Their concept of party government functioning on political planes has become the ideal with them as the best form of government for every country, and the one-sided and powerful propaganda, which naturally appeals to the British, has led them into a serious blunder, in producing the constitution envisaged in the Government of India Act of 1935. We find that the most leading statesmen of Great Britain, saturated with these notions, have in their pronouncements seriously asserted and expressed a hope that the passage of time will harmonize the inconsistent elements of India.

A leading journal like the London *Times*, commenting on the Government of India Act of 1935, wrote: “Undoubtedly the differences between the Hindus and Muslims are not of religion in the strict sense of the word but also of law and culture, that they may be said, indeed, to represent two entirely distinct and separate civilizations. However, in the course of time, the superstition will die out and India will be molded into a single nation.” So, according to the London *Times*, the only difficulties are superstitions. These fundamental and deep-rooted differences, spiritual, economic, cultural, social, and political, have been euphemized as mere “superstitions.” But surely it is a flagrant disregard of the past history of the subcontinent of India as well as the fundamental Islamic conception of society vis-à-vis that of Hinduism to characterize them as mere “superstitions.” Notwithstanding a thousand years of close contact, nationalities, which are as divergent today as ever, cannot at any time be expected to transform themselves into one nation merely by means of subjecting them to a democratic constitution and holding them forcibly together by unnatural and artificial methods of British parliamentary statute. What the unitary government of India for one hundred fifty years had failed to achieve cannot be realized by the imposition of a central federal government. . . .

The problem in India is not of an intercommunal character but manifestly of an international one, and it must be treated as such. So long as this basic and fundamental truth is not realized, any constitution that may be built will result in disaster and will prove destructive and harmful not only to the Mussalmans but to the British and Hindus also. If the British government are really in earnest and sincere to secure [the] peace and happiness of the people of this subcontinent, the only course open to us all is to allow the major nations separate

homelands by dividing India into "autonomous national states." There is no reason why these states should be antagonistic to each other. On the other hand, the rivalry and the natural desire and efforts on the part of one to dominate the social order and establish political supremacy over the other in the government of the country will disappear. It will lead more towards natural good will by international pacts between them, and they can live in complete harmony with their neighbors. This will lead further to a friendly settlement all the more easily with regard to minorities by reciprocal arrangements and adjustments between Muslim India and Hindu India, which will far more adequately and effectively safeguard the rights and interests of Muslims and various other minorities.

It is extremely difficult to appreciate why our Hindu friends fail to understand the real nature of Islam and Hinduism. They are not religions in the strict sense of the word, but are, in fact, different and distinct social orders, and it is a dream that the Hindus and Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality, and this misconception of one Indian nation has gone far beyond the limits and is the cause of most of your troubles and will lead India to destruction if we fail to revise our notions in time. The Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs, literatures. They neither intermarry nor interdine together and, indeed, they belong to two different civilizations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. . . . It is quite clear that Hindus and Mussalmans derive their inspiration from different sources of history. They have different epics, different heroes, and different episodes. Very often the hero of one is a foe of the other and, likewise, their victories and defeats overlap. To yoke together two such nations under a single state, one as a numerical minority and the other as a majority, must lead to growing discontent and final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the government of such a state. . . .

History has also shown us many geographical tracts, much smaller than the subcontinent of India, which otherwise might have been called one country, but which have been divided into as many states as there are nations inhabiting them. . . . Whereas under the plea of the unity of India and one nation, which does not exist, it is sought to pursue here the line of one central government, we know that the history of the last twelve hundred years has failed to achieve unity and has witnessed, during the ages, India always divided into Hindu India and Muslim India. The present artificial unity of India dates back only to the British conquest and is maintained by the British bayonet, but termination of the British regime, which is implicit in the recent declaration of His Majesty's government, will be the herald of the entire break-up with worse disaster than has ever taken place during the last one thousand years under Muslims. . . .

Muslim India cannot accept any constitution which must necessarily result in a Hindu majority government. Hindus and Muslims brought together under a democratic system forced upon the minorities can only mean Hindu raj

[rule]. Democracy of the kind with which the Congress High Command is enamored would mean the complete destruction of what is most precious in Islam. We have had ample experience of the working of the provincial constitutions during the last two and a half years and any repetition of such a government must lead to civil war and raising of private armies as recommended by Mr. Gandhi to [the] Hindus of Sukkur [in Sindh] when he said that they must defend themselves violently or non-violently, blow for blow. . . .

Mussalmans are not a minority as it is commonly known and understood. One has only got to look round. Even today, according to the British map of India, four out of eleven provinces, where the Muslims dominate more or less, are functioning notwithstanding the decision of the Hindu Congress High Command to non-cooperate and prepare for civil disobedience. Mussalmans are a nation according to any definition of a nation, and they must have their homelands, their territory, and their state. We wish to live in peace and harmony with our neighbors as a free and independent people. We wish our people to develop to the fullest our spiritual, cultural, economic, social, and political life in a way that we think best and in consonance with our own ideals and according to the genius of our people. Honesty demands and the vital interests of millions of our people impose a sacred duty upon us to find an honorable and peaceful solution, which would be just and fair to all. But at the same time we cannot be moved or diverted from our purpose and objective by threats or intimidations. We must be prepared to face all difficulties and consequences, make all the sacrifices that may be required of us to achieve the goal we have set in front of us.

[From Jinnah, *Some Recent Speeches and Writings*, ed. Jamil-ud-din Ahmad (Lahore: M. Ashraf, 1942), 1:174–180.]

THE PUSH TOWARD A NEW MUSLIM NATION

In 1943 Jinnah voiced his confidence that India's Muslims would turn the idea of Pakistan into a reality; inspired by Islam's ideals, they would then create their own constitutional democracy. His attack on "landlords and capitalists" won the greatest applause, perhaps because Hindus were generally wealthier than Muslims.

The progress that Mussalmans, as a nation, have made, during these three years, is a remarkable fact. Never before in the history of the world has a nation rallied around a common platform and a common ideal in such a short time as the Muslims have done in this vast subcontinent. Never before has a nation, miscalled a minority, asserted itself so quickly, and so effectively. Never before has the mental outlook of a nation been unified so suddenly. Never before has the solidarity of millions of population been established and demonstrated in so limited a time and under such peculiar circumstances as are prevalent in India.

Three years ago Pakistan was a resolution. Today it is an article of faith, a matter of life and death with Muslim India. . . .

We have created a solidarity of opinion, a union of mind and thought. Let us concentrate on the uplift of our people for their educational, political, economic, social and moral well-being. Let us cooperate with and give all help to our leaders to work for our collective good. Let us make our organization stronger and put it on a thorough[ly] efficient footing. . . . We, the Muslims, must rely mainly upon our own inherent qualities, our own natural potentialities, our own international solidarity and our own united will to face the future.

I particularly appeal to our intelligentsia and Muslim students to come forward and rise to the occasion. Train yourselves, equip yourselves for the task that lies before us. The final victory depends upon you and is within our grasp. You have performed wonders in the past. . . . You are not lacking in the great qualities and virtues in comparison with the other nations. Only you have to be fully conscious of that fact and act with courage, faith and unity. . . .

[From Jinnah, *Speeches and Writings*, 1:470–471.]

I have no doubt in my mind that a large body of us visualize Pakistan as people's government. Either you seize it by force or get it by agreement. But until you get it, whether it is from a foreign nation or whether it is our own government, the question as to the constitution and the form and system of a government does not arise. . . . You will elect your representatives to the constitution-making body. You may not know your power, you may not know how to use it. This would be your fault. But I am sure that democracy is in our blood. It is in our marrows. Only centuries of adverse circumstances have made the circulation of that blood cold. It has got frozen and your arteries have not been functioning. But, thank God, the blood is circulating again, thanks to the Muslim League efforts. It will be a people's government. Here I should like to give a warning to the landlords and capitalists who have flourished at our expense by a system which is so vicious, which is so wicked and which makes them so selfish that it is difficult to reason with them [*Tremendous applause.*] The exploitation of the masses has gone into their blood. They have forgotten the lessons of Islam. Greed and selfishness have made these people subordinate others to their interests in order to fatten themselves. It is true we are not in power today. You go anywhere to the country-side. I have visited villages. There are millions and millions of our people who hardly get one meal a day. Is this civilization? Is this the aim of Pakistan? [*Cries of no, no.*] Do you visualize that millions have been exploited and cannot get one meal a day? If that is the idea of Pakistan I would not have it [*Cheers.*] If they are wise they will have to adjust themselves to the new modern conditions of life. If they don't, God help them [*Hear, hear, renewed cheers and applause.*] Therefore let us have faith in ourselves. . . . The constitution of Pakistan can only be framed by the Millat [the Muslim community or nation] and the people. Prepare yourselves and see that you frame a constitution which is to

your heart's desire. There is a lot of misunderstanding. A lot of mischief is created. Is it going to be an Islamic government? Is it not begging the question? Is it not a question of passing a vote of censure on yourself? The constitution and the government will be what the people will decide. The only question is that of minorities.

The minorities are entitled to get a definite assurance and ask: "Where do we stand in the Pakistan that you visualize?" That is an issue of giving a definite and clear assurance to the minorities. We have done it. We have passed a resolution that the minorities must be protected and safeguarded to the fullest extent and as I said before any civilized government will do it and ought to do it. So far as we are concerned our own history, our Prophet, have given the clearest proof that non-Muslims have been treated not only justly and fairly but generously.

[From Jinnah, *Speeches and Writings*, 1:506–508.]

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI'S APPROACH TO CONGRESS–LEAGUE SETTLEMENT, AND THE GANDHI–JINNAH LETTERS, 1944

Because of the passage of the August 1942 Congress Resolution (the "Quit India" Resolution), most Congress leaders were imprisoned for the duration of World War II. But this did not prevent the Congress and the Muslim League from making efforts to agree on a path that would pave the way to the rapid attainment of a free India. One go-between in this process in 1944 was the Congress leader C. Rajagopalachari (1878–1972; usually referred to as "Rajaji"), the former Congress chief minister of Madras, from 1937 to 1939. He had disagreed with his colleagues over the Cripps Mission, and resigned from the Congress; thus he was not imprisoned with other Congressmen in 1942. So in 1943 he devised the so-called Rajaji Formula, which he sent to Gandhi for approval. Gaining a positive response from Gandhi, Rajaji wrote to Jinnah seeking his response.

LETTER TO M. A. JINNAH

According to Rajaji's scheme, the Congress and the Muslim League would make an agreement regarding territory and jurisdiction over it, work together for an India independent of the British, and then fully implement the terms of the agreement. It provided that areas (not provinces) with an absolute Muslim majority could opt out of a united India after independence. These Muslim-majority areas would be determined by a careful survey of Punjab, Bengal, and Assam, so that a maximum number of non-Muslims would remain within the united India, and the Muslims choosing not to join this united India would form their own nation-state. Rajaji was calling for a division of India through the partition of Bengal and the Punjab. Jinnah, backed by the Lahore

Resolution of the Muslim League (1940), had called for a Pakistan that would include the entire provinces of Bengal, Assam, and the Punjab. Therefore, large minorities in these provinces (Hindus in Bengal, Hindus and Sikhs in the Punjab), only slightly less than half of the population of each, would be included in the League's new nation of Pakistan, presumably against their will. Some have argued that Rajaji, an acute lawyer like Jinnah (and Gandhi), was calling Jinnah's bluff and showing him what a real Pakistan might consist of.

8 April 1944

Here is the basis for a settlement which I discussed with Gandhiji in March, 1943, and of which he expressed full approval. He then authorised me to signify his approval of these terms should I be able to convince you of their being just and fair to all. As the Government have refused to relax any of the restrictions imposed on him to enable him to discuss or negotiate terms of any settlement, I write this to you on his behalf and hope that this will bring about a final settlement of the most unfortunate impasse we are in. You are aware of the intensity of my desire for a settlement. I was very glad when I found it possible to obtain Gandhiji's approval of these terms. I hope that you will bestow your fullest thought to the justice and fairness of these proposals and help to terminate a condition of affairs which is steadily causing all round deterioration. . . .

BASIS FOR SETTLEMENT

Basis for terms of settlement between the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League to which Mahatma Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah agree and which they will endeavour respectively to get the Congress and the League to approve.

(1) Subject to the terms set out below as regards the constitution for Free India, the Muslim League endorses the Indian demand for independence and will cooperate with the Congress in the formation of a provisional interim Government for the transitional period.

(2) After the termination of the war, a commission shall be appointed for demarcating contiguous districts in the north-west and east of India, wherein the Muslim population is in absolute majority. In the areas thus demarcated, a plebiscite of all the inhabitants held on the basis of adult suffrage or other practicable franchise shall ultimately decide the issue of separation from Hindustan. If the majority decide in favour of forming a sovereign State separate from Hindustan, such decision shall be given effect to, without prejudice to the right of districts on the border to choose to join either State.

(3) It will be open to all parties to advocate their points of view before the plebiscite is held.

(4) In the event of separation, mutual agreements shall be entered into for safe-guarding defence, commerce and communications and for other essential purposes.

(5) Any transfer of population shall only be on an absolutely voluntary basis.

(6) These terms shall be binding only in case of transfer by Britain of full power and responsibility for the governance of India.

[*Indian Annual Register* (1944) 2:129–130, reprinted in C. H. Philips, ed., *The Evolution of India and Pakistan, 1858–1947*, 355–356.]

THE GANDHI–JINNAH CORRESPONDENCE ON RAJAGOPALACHARI'S FORMULA

Upon his release from prison in 1944, Gandhi took up the cudgels and wrote to Jinnah in the same terms as Rajaji, and Jinnah responded at length. There was no meeting of the minds, as these documents make clear. They later met at Jinnah's residence, with the Rajagopalachari formula forming the basis of their talks.

(1) MAHATMA GANDHI TO M. A. JINNAH, 24 SEPTEMBER 1944

I have your two letters of 23rd September in reply to my letters of 22nd and 23rd.

With your assistance, I am exploring the possibilities of reaching an agreement so that the claim embodied in the Muslim League resolution of Lahore may be reasonably satisfied. You must therefore have no apprehensions that the August [Quit India] resolution will stand in the way of our reaching an agreement. The resolution dealt with the question of India as against Britain and it cannot stand in the way of our settlement.

I proceed on the assumption that India is not to be regarded as two or more nations but as one family consisting of many members of whom the Muslims living in the North-West zones, i.e., Baluchistan, Sindh, North West Frontier Province and that part of the Punjab where they are in absolute majority over all the other elements and in parts of Bengal and Assam where they are in absolute majority, desire to live in separation from the rest of India.

Differing from you on the general basis I can yet recommend to the Congress and the country the acceptance of the claim for separation contained in the Muslim League Resolution of Lahore of 1940 on my basis and on the following terms:—

The areas should be demarcated by a Commission approved by the Congress and the League. The wishes of the inhabitants of the areas demarcated should be ascertained through the votes of the adult population of the areas or through some equivalent method.

If the vote is in favour of separation it shall be agreed that these areas shall form a separate state as soon as possible after India is free from foreign domination and can therefore be constituted into two sovereign Independent States. There shall be a treaty of separation which should also provide for the efficient and satisfactory administration of foreign affairs, defence, internal communications,

customs, commerce and the like, which must necessarily continue to be the matters of common interest between the contracting parties.

The treaty shall also contain terms for safeguarding the rights of minorities in the two states.

Immediately on the acceptance of this agreement by the Congress and the League the two shall decide upon a common course of action for the attainment of independence of India.

The League will however be free to remain out of any direct action to which the Congress may resort and in which the League may not be willing to participate.

If you do not agree to these terms could you let me know in precise terms what you would have me to accept in terms of the Lahore Resolution and bind myself to recommend to the Congress? If you could kindly do this, I shall be able to see apart from the difference in approach what definite terms I can agree to. In your letter of 23rd September you refer to "the basis and fundamental principles embodied in the Lahore Resolution" and ask me to accept them. Surely this is unnecessary when as I feel I have accepted the concrete consequence that should follow from such acceptance.

(11) M. A. JINNAH TO MAHATMA GANDHI, 25 SEPTEMBER 1944

I am in receipt of your letter of September 24th, and I thank you for it. You have already rejected the basis and fundamental principles of the Lahore Resolution.

(1) You do not accept that the Mussalmans of India are a nation.

(2) You do not accept that the Mussalmans have an inherent right of self-determination.

(3) You do not accept that they alone are entitled to exercise this right of theirs for self-determination.

(4) You do not accept that Pakistan is composed of two zones, North-West and North-East, comprising six provinces, namely Sindh, Baluchistan, North-West Frontier Province, the Punjab, Bengal and Assam, subject to territorial adjustments that may be agreed upon, as indicated in the Lahore Resolution. The matter of demarcating and defining the territories can be taken up after the fundamentals above mentioned are accepted, and for that purpose machinery may be set up by agreement.

You do not accept the provisions embodied in the Lahore Resolution for safe-guarding the minorities, and yet in your letter under reply you say: "With your assistance, I am exploring the possibilities of reaching an agreement so that the claim embodied in the Muslim League Resolution of Lahore may be reasonably satisfied," and proceed to say "you must therefore have no apprehensions that the August Resolution will stand in the way of our reaching an agreement."

I have already clearly explained to you that the August resolution, so long as it stands, is a bar, for it is fundamentally opposed to the Lahore Resolution. You then proceed to say "that resolution dealt with the question of India as against Britain and it cannot stand in the way of our settlement." I am not at present concerned with Britain, but the August Resolution, as I have already stated, is against the ideals and demands of the Muslim League. Further, there is the resolution of Jagat Narayan Lal, passed by the All-India Congress Committee in May 1942 at Allahabad, which, in express terms, lays down as follows:

"The A.I.C.C. is of opinion that any proposal to disintegrate India by giving liberty to any component state or territorial unit to secede from the Indian Union or Federation will be highly detrimental to the best interests of the people of the different states and provinces and the country as a whole and the Congress, therefore, cannot agree to any such proposal."

These two resolutions, so long as they stand, are a complete bar to any settlement on the basis of the division of India as Pakistan and Hindustan. It is open to the Congress to revise and modify them, but you are only speaking in your individual capacity, and even in that capacity you are holding fast to the August Resolution and you have given no indication of your attitude regarding Jagat Narayan Lal's resolution. I have repeatedly made it clear after we had discussed the Gandhi-Rajaji formula, as you maintained that, to use your own language, "Rajaji not only has not put the Lahore Resolution out of shape and mutilated it but has given it substance and form," and proceeded to say "Indeed in view of your dislike of the Rajaji formula, I have, at any rate for the moment, put it out of my mind and I am now concentrating on the Lahore Resolution in the hope of finding a ground for mutual agreement." When I asked for further clarification which you furnished me by your letter of September 15th, you started by saying "I have shunted the Rajaji formula and with your assistance I am applying my mind very seriously to the famous Lahore Resolution of the Muslim League," and thence forward the Gandhi-Rajaji formula was not discussed any further, and the question of your representative character and authority, which I had pointed out from the very commencement, therefore did not arise, as you had given me the task of converting you to the fundamentals of the Lahore Resolution, and ever since we discussed the Lahore Resolution only at great length and examined the pros and cons, and finally you have rejected it. As a result of our correspondence and discussions I find that the question of the division of India as Pakistan and Hindustan is only on your lips and it does not come from your heart, and suddenly at the eleventh hour you put forward a new suggestion, consisting only of two sentences by your letter of September 22nd, saying, "I have therefore suggested a way out. Let it be a partition as between two brothers if a division there must be." I naturally asked you what this new suggestion of yours meant and wanted you to give me rough outlines of this new idea of yours as to how and when the division is to take place and in what way it is different from the division envisaged in the Lahore Resolution, and now you

have been good enough to give me your amplification, in your letter of September 24th under reply, in which you say: "Differing from you on the general basis I can yet recommend to the Congress and the country the acceptance of the claim for separation contained in the Muslim League Resolution of Lahore 1940 on my basis and on the following terms." The terms clearly indicate that your basis is in vital conflict with and is opposed to the fundamental basis and principles of the Lahore Resolution. Now let me take your main terms:—

(a) "I proceed on the assumption that India is not to be regarded as two or more nations but as one family consisting of many members of whom the Muslims living in the North-West zones i.e., Baluchistan, Sindh, North-West Frontier Province and that part of the Punjab where they are in absolute majority over all the other elements and in parts of Bengal and Assam where they are in absolute majority, desire to live in separation from the rest of India." If this term were accepted and given effect to, the present boundaries of these provinces would be maimed and mutilated beyond redemption and leave us only with the husk, and it is opposed to the Lahore Resolution.

(b) That even in these mutilated areas so defined, the right of self-determination will not be exercised by the Muslims but by the inhabitants of these areas so demarcated. This again is opposed to the fundamentals of the Lahore Resolution.

(c) That if the vote is in favour of separation they shall be allowed to form a separate state as soon as possible after India is free from foreign dominations, whereas we propose that we should come to a complete settlement of our own immediately, and by our united front and efforts do everything in our power to secure the freedom and independence of the peoples of India on the basis of Pakistan and Hindustan.

(d) Next you say "There shall be a treaty of separation which should also provide for the efficient and satisfactory administration of foreign affairs, defence, internal communications, customs, commerce and the like which must necessarily continue to be matters of common interests between the contracting parties." If these vital matters are to be administered by some central authority, you do not indicate what sort of authority or machinery will be set up to administer these matters and how and to whom again that authority will be responsible. According to the Lahore Resolution, as I have already explained to you, all these matters, which are the lifeblood of any state, cannot be delegated to any central authority or government. The matter of security of the two states and the natural and mutual obligations that may arise out of physical contiguity will be for the constitution-making body of Pakistan and that of Hindustan, or other party concerned, to deal with on the footing of their being two independent states. As regards the safeguarding of the rights of minorities, I have already explained that this question of safeguarding the minorities is fully stated in the Lahore Resolution.

You will therefore see that the entire basis of your new proposal is fundamentally opposed to the Lahore Resolution. . . . Why not then accept the fundamentals of the Lahore Resolution and proceed to settle the details?

[*Sapru Committee Report*, 1945, app. V, xxi–xxv, as reprinted in C. H. Philips, ed., *The Evolution of India and Pakistan*, 1858–1947, 356–360.]

G. D. ADHIKARI AND THE VIEWS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

The Communist Party of India (CPI) was formed in the early 1920s, but operated mostly underground after it was banned by the government of India. When World War II began in 1939, the CPI declared it an “imperialists’ war” between dueling empires. With the German invasion of the Soviet Union, the CPI declared World War II a “People’s War,” and thereafter acted openly with government approval.

During the war, one of its chief ideologues, Dr. G. D. Adhikari, following Stalin’s theory on the nationalist question (it appears that Dr. Adhikari was not well informed about actual Soviet treatment of the minorities in the Soviet Union), argued that India was a multinational nation inclusive of many nations. Each of these nations was to be allowed self-determination so that, he thought, they would come to see that it was in their interest to remain parts of one larger nation. In his view, Pakistan was a nation among many in South Asia, and was thus to be allowed self-determination. He maintained that granting self-determination, up to and including the right of secession, would allow the potential Pakistanis to come back within the fold of Indian unity and gain the ends they sought. Communist backing thus was given to the movement for a Pakistan to be formed out of the Muslim community of India. This analysis gave support on the left to the fledgling Pakistan movement, which was growing during the war while Congress leaders sat in prison. In later years, some CPI leaders regretted their adherence to these views and their unqualified support for the war effort, since this alienated them from the mainstream of Indian nationalism. After the war their general secretary, P. C. Joshi, approached Gandhi and the Congress for “reinstatement,” but was brushed off.

NATIONAL UNITY NOW!

. . . Without national unity, without the broad unity of the masses—both Hindu and Muslim—freedom cannot be won, that was always axiomatic in our independence movement. . . .

How does it come about that the leadership of a national movement which has to its credit the achievement of the largest measure of unity of the Indian people during the last 20 years or so, now stands helpless before the question of Hindu–Muslim unity? How does it happen that Gandhiji says “India indivisible”

is an article of faith with him and Jinnah says "Pakistan" is an article of faith with him, and there is stalemate and gaping disunity among our people? The Indian National Congress stands and has stood consistently for the complete independence of the country and for the democratic rights and liberties of the people. In the free India of Congress conception there will be religious freedom, the protection of culture for every section of the people. Why should not the Congress programme, which visualises free and democratic India, united and indivisible, attract the Muslims? Or rather, if it was adequate for so many years to unite the Hindus and Muslims in the common struggle for freedom, why does it appear to fail in recent years? In the mass nationalist upsurge which began with 1935 and continued to rise up to 1940, the Muslim masses too were drawn into the common flood. But how did it happen that the awakened Muslim masses, especially, during the period of Congress Ministries rallied to the banner of the Muslim League which now became a powerful Muslim organization? Why did the Hindu-Muslim tension begin to rise during this period? How did it happen that the breach between the Muslim masses and the national movement seemed to widen[,] reaching its climax in the Pakistan Resolution passed by the Muslim League in March 1940? Also during this period, there has been a certain growth of Hindu Sabha influence inside the Congress. Unless we understand the peculiar nature of this accentuation of the communal problem and tension during the recent five years, we will not be able to see why the national leadership has failed to solve it, and why its failure has culminated in the bankruptcy which seeks to reverse the fundamental axiom of our national movement, viz., national unity for national freedom. . . .

Apart from a general sharpening of Hindu-Muslim relations, there has been also a cropping-up of provincial jealousies and frictions, such as the Bengal-Bihar controversy, the question of a separate Andhra province and the question of "Samyukta" [united] Karnatak and so on. The explanation is given that this is due to the competition between the bourgeoisie of these various communities and provinces for jobs and power which was brought to the surface by the new constitution. This is, of course, part of the truth. The cleavage brought about between the bourgeois sections of the various communities and provinces is only one aspect of the question. It is often stated that the masses have no communalism or provincialism. This is true in so far as the interests of the toiling masses all over the world and in the country are identical. But in actual practice, as the general national anti-imperialist upsurge spreads deeper into the masses, it finds an echo in the growing up of sectional, communal, and provincial patriotism, which may not necessarily weaken or conflict with the larger national patriotism, but which is often used by the bourgeois leadership for accentuating national disunity.

The growing communal tension . . . as well as provincial jealousies and frictions which arose during the election period and in the period of the Congress Ministries were therefore a distorted expression of an otherwise healthy growth,

viz., the masses of the individual nationalities awakening to all-India anti-imperialist national consciousness. . . .

Firstly, in spite of imperialist hindrances, bourgeois economic (industrial) development of our country is proceeding apace horizontally if not vertically. The level of industrialisation is not rising but the same low level of industrialisation is spreading to every nook and corner of India. As a result there is a growing competition between the bourgeoisie of the different individual nationalities. The provincial autonomy under the new constitution tended to accentuate these frictions and we have in this period the Bengali-Behari, Marathi-Karnataki, Andhra-Tamilnad questions, the Hindu-Muslim question in Bengal, in the U. P. and in the Punjab, cropping up. This is one aspect of the question—the bourgeois aspect—the disruptive aspect, which imperialism and its agents use for their policy of divide and rule. . . .

Secondly, we have the healthier aspect of the question. Side by side with the bourgeois development, the all-India national anti-imperialist movement is spreading to every nook and corner of India and bringing the peasant masses of the most backward nationalities and communities into its vortex. . . . Here is the progressive aspect of the accentuation of the communal and provincial jealousies, which our growing national democratic movement itself brings to the surface. Herein lies the key to the solution of the communal conflict in its new form which our national movement has to perceive. . . .

Here it will be asked: what has the Hindu-Muslim problem to do with this cropping up of provincial jealousies on the one hand, and the awakening of individual national consciousness? The Hindu-Muslim conflict arises out of the economic and other competition between the bourgeoisie or the upper class of the two communities while the imperialists are using the same to successfully divide the masses. . . . During 1936–42 when there was a general anti-imperialist mass upsurge . . . the Muslim masses too shared in the general anti-imperialist upsurge; but this expressed itself in the bulk of the Muslim petty-bourgeois masses going under the influence of the League. There was also a rise in the Muslim followers of the Congress but not as sharp and striking as in the case of the Muslim League. . . . In 1938 the Muslim League accepted the complete independence of India as its goal. The Muslim League leadership can be said to have undergone a transformation during this period. It is no longer feudal-reactionary, no longer just a willing tool of imperialism. It is now an industrial bourgeois leadership, which is no more just an adjunct of imperialism but one which plays an oppositional role vis-à-vis imperialism.

In fact, the Muslim League is to the Muslim petty-bourgeois mass what the Indian National Congress is to the Indian masses in general. This became quite clear in the imperialist phase of the war. The leadership of the Congress took to passive opposition to war and demanded recognition of complete independence and such present freedom which would give the Indian people effective power in the government of the country immediately. The Muslim League

leadership too adopted the attitude of passive non-co-operation with the war and demanded Pakistan, which is complete independence to such territorial units in which the Muslims predominate. Immediately, they demanded political equality with the Congress in any settlement at the Centre or effective power at the Centre for the League, in case the Congress refused to accept the settlement. To the Muslim masses, therefore, it appears that the Muslim League leadership is fighting not only for the complete independence of India from imperialist rule but also for freedom and equality to territorial units which are predominantly Muslim and for the protection of the rights of Muslim minorities in other provinces in relation to culture, education and language. Thus the rise of the Muslim League influence cannot be regarded as a reactionary phenomenon. On the other hand, it is the expression of the growing anti-imperialist upsurge among the Muslim masses, of the growth of the individual national consciousness of the Sindhis, of Punjabi Muslims . . . and so on within the framework of the broader all-India nationalism. . . .

To see nothing in the problem but religious and cultural differences, to ascribe the deadlock in Congress–Muslim League relations to some irrational, obscurantist and fanatical element in the Muslims, which Mr. Jinnah is in a position to exploit for opportunist ends, because of the presence of the British Power, is not to understand the problem at all. . . . But as soon as we realise that the leadership of the Muslim League is bourgeois in character and is playing an oppositional role vis-à-vis imperialism in a somewhat analogous way to the leadership of the Indian National Congress itself, as soon as we see the anti-imperialist base of the rise of the Muslim League influence, as soon as we grasp that behind the demand for Pakistan is the justified desire of the people of Muslim nationalities such as Sindhis, Baluchis, Punjabis (Muslims), [and] Pathans to build their free national life within the greater unity of the all-Indian national freedom, we at once see there is a very simple solution to the communal problem in its new phase. . . .

It is the historic task and responsibility of the Indian National Congress, which has achieved such a large measure of national unity thus far, for achieving national freedom, to take the next forward step towards unity, which the new phase of the communal problem demands, at this most critical turning point of our nation. In uniting the various sections of the people for national freedom, that freedom itself has to be defined in terms of a programme of democratic rights and liberties. The Indian National Congress has to a large extent succeeded in putting such a programme before the nation and has achieved on the basis of that programme a very large measure of national unity. . . . It certainly says that in a free India there will be freedom of worship for every one and that the religious and cultural rights of minorities would be guaranteed. It pledges itself to abolish all inequalities based on caste, creed and origin (such as untouchability, etc.). But these declarations, essential as they are, for securing unity, are no longer enough.

The conception of India's unity was never a static one. It is a living and growing reality which is developing within its womb a host of individual nationalities which lived together on the Indian soil through centuries, and are now waking to new consciousness. Unequal economic development leads to friction and conflicts between communities and different national units. The growing sweep of the All-India people's movement tends to unite these communities and national units into one united national front for freedom. . . . The National Congress . . . has to recognise the just claim of the peoples of these individual nationalities to autonomous state existence within the framework of a free Indian union, and their right to secession from the union, if they so desired. The National Congress, of course, dimly sees that the free India of the future would be a family of a number of nationalities, each having a territorial unit to which it is attached by historic tradition as its homeland, each having its own language, culture, common economic life, etc. The division of Congress Provinces linguistically reflects this realisation. In the resolution of the Working Committee on the rejection of the Cripps proposals, this idea was expressed more explicitly. The Congress came very near to recognising the right of self-determination of such national territorial units. But in the Allahabad A.I.C.C. there was a relapse again. . . . The Congress virtually denied the right of self-determination to any nationality inasmuch as it refused to recognise the right of separation to any territorial unit. . . . Guaranteeing of autonomous state existence, with the right of political separation, to individual nationalities having their own territorial units to which they are bound by history, having a common language, culture, economic life and psychological make-up, can never lead to the vivisection of the motherland. On the other hand, by dispelling the distrust and suspicions which exist to-day among the people of the various nationalities, the Congress would be laying the foundation of a greater unity of action now and a greater unity of India visualised as a fraternal union of free nationalities, afterwards. Those who say recognition of the right of separation for individual nationalities would lead to the disintegration of the country, really lack faith in their own people. A clear-throated declaration of the type we have printed elsewhere, if made by the Congress will provide a real basis for Congress-League unity just because it clearly grants the rational kernel of the Pakistan demand. For according to it, nationalities such as Sindhis, Baluchis, Pathans and Punjabi Muslims will have the right to secede if they so desire. But it must be borne in mind that the recognition of the right of nationalities to separation, is the recognition of their equality and freedom from oppression in a free India. This would lay the basis not for separation but for [a] joint fight for freedom against the aggressors and for the creation of an Indian Union based on voluntary co-operation of free nationalities.

By taking such a position, the National Congress would be building unity . . . conceding straightaway what is just and right in the Pakistan demand. Wherever people of Muslim faith living together in a territorial unit, form a nationality in

the sense defined above, they certainly have the right to autonomous state existence, just like the other nationalities in India, like the Andhras, Kannadis, Marathis, Bengalis, etc. Wherever there are interspersed Muslim minorities within other autonomous states, their rights regarding culture, education and language would be guaranteed. . . . If the Congress makes such a declaration, proclaims it as a part of its own programme of freedom, and calls upon the Muslim masses and the League to join with the Congress in a joint effort to win National Government, Jinnah's last argument against unity would have been knocked out. He will have to agree to unite. What would result then would be a period of the most gigantic joint effort of the Indian people for the defence of this country and for their freedom, under the leadership of their National Government. Out of this joint effort of the united people of India, no separate Pakistan and no Hindudom can ever rise but a happy family of free and autonomous states of various nationalities united in an Indian Union. . . .

To begin with it is quite clear that India was not a nation in the modern sense from times immemorial, from the days of Ashoka and Akbar. Nation building in India begins as in . . . all countries, with the advent of capitalism. This takes place in India with the British conquest. . . .

Our nineteenth and early twentieth century liberal forefathers thought that the British conquest had laid the basis for the unification of India into a single nation and that the process had begun. . . .

This one nation—one language idea, draped in Hindu imagery, has been carried over from the past into the consciousness of our modern nationalist movement. It persists even today at a time when the reality of our national development has become quite different; at a time when this development is taking the form more and more clearly of a multi-national pattern. . . .

Each of these areas is now having its own Chamber of Commerce—for instance, Andhra, Karnatak, Maharashtra, Bengal, Punjab, etc. What does this show? It shows that the indigenous bourgeoisie in each area is attempting to consolidate its own market in its own homeland. Besides, in each of these areas there is development of their own language, culture and literature. Not only this; in some of these areas where one nation has been cut up into different provinces, the demand for unification of the nation into a single province has been put forward as a democratic demand. As mentioned above there is the demand for Samyukta Karnatak, for separation of Andhra, for united Maharashtra. The demand for Pakistan . . . [in] its progressive essence, is in reality the demand for the self-determination and separation of the areas of Muslim nationalities of the Punjab, Pathans, Sind, Baluchistan and of the eastern provinces of Bengal. . . .

Thus the demand for self-determination of the nationalities has to be looked upon as a just demand. The essence of this demand is equality and freedom

from oppression. To refuse this demand means to sanction national inequality and oppression.

To the Congress patriot . . . We have to put before him a picture of a multi-national India in which the problem of Indian unity is solved in a higher and more lasting manner. We have to show him concretely that we Communists are not dividers, but unifiers; that our solution leads to a higher unity on a higher plane, a unity the like of which India has not seen in her history. . . .

Our solution should neither lead to hair-splitting ethnographic discussions on the one hand, nor should it be a mere fig-leaf to trick the Muslim peoples into unity!

Take Baluchistan. The Baluchis who are Muslims, speaking the Baluchi language, form 98–99% of the population of Baluchistan and the State of Kalat. They form a distinct nationality. . . .

In the Punjab, the Muslims of Western Punjab (beyond the River Sutlej) bear the distinct impress of a nationality with a contiguous territory, language, culture, economic life and psychological make-up. These Western districts have a Muslim population of over 60% on an average, in many cases this percentage exceeds 70 or 80. But the question is not one of religion or of numerical preponderance. The dominant impress of the particular nationality is there on the life of this whole region.

This is why we grant the right of self-determination to this Muslim nationality of Western Punjab. The Sikhs and the Hindus in the eastern districts of the Punjab can easily come to a settlement with Muslims of the western districts on the basis of self-determination and guarantee of cultural rights. They can thus form a united autonomous Punjab, with the right to secede. . . .

Then comes the question of Bengal. Firstly, the Bengalis form a distinct nationality and so should be given the right of self-determination. There is much more in common between the Bengali Hindu and the Bengali Muslim than between the Bengali Muslim and say, the Pathan. But in this case over and above this fact, Eastern Bengal forms a special problem. Here generally speaking there is a Muslim population of more than 60%. Within the framework of a common nationality, the Muslim peasantry of Eastern Bengal has a distinct cultural complex of its own which has made its impress on Eastern Bengal as a separate entity. We have to recognise this. In the case of nationalities too, there are such things as transitional forms, and we have to recognise in Eastern Bengal precisely such a transitional stage of development. . . . The solution put forward in our Party resolution, on the one hand, enables the peasantry of East Bengal to share and enrich the common national heritage of Bengal; on the other hand, it enables us to unite them and to convince them that they would be better off if they remained within the Bengali State. It satisfies their urge and by this very means, paves the way for their remaining inside the Bengali state. . . . The Muslims in the other provinces (including Eastern

Punjab) form interspersed minorities . . . the guarantee of cultural rights, etc., is sufficient.

[From G. D. Adhikari, *Pakistan and Indian National Unity* (Bombay: People's Publishing House, 1943), 1–9, 34–36, 38–39, 44–46, compiled from articles published in *People's War*, Aug. 1942.]

SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE: ON THE RANI OF JHANSI REGIMENT AND CONGRESS–LEAGUE NEGOTIATIONS

As a congressman from a Muslim-majority province, Subhas Bose (see chapter 6 for background) was constantly reaching out to the Muslims inside and outside the Muslim League. He opposed the division of political India on the basis of religion, and he wanted congressmen to work to bring the Hindu Mahasabha as well as the Muslim League closer to Congress platforms. He and the Bengal Congress tried such measures during the late 1930s and early 1940s. From 1941 to 1945, while he was outside of India searching for military and political aid from the Axis powers to help liberate India, Subhas Bose commented on political developments within India. His views were broadcast from Europe, and later from Southeast Asia. As one fervently devoted to the unity of India, he was filled with dismay as the Rajaji formula was put forward, with Gandhi's apparent agreement. He wanted no concessions made to the Muslim League about Pakistan.

“THE RANI OF JHANSI REGIMENT”

This first selection addresses women's role in the independence struggle, from the Rani of Jhansi in 1857 (see chapter 2) to 1943 and the formation within the Indian National Army of a women's regiment named in her honor. It comes from a speech delivered on the occasion of the opening of the training camp of volunteers for the Rani of Jhansi Regiment at Singapore on October 22, 1943.

Sisters and Brothers—The opening of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment Training Camp . . . is a very important landmark in the progress of our movement in East Asia. . . . Ours is not a merely political movement. We are . . . engaged in the great task of regenerating our Nation. . . . It is . . . in the fitness of things that there should be a stir of New Life among our womenfolk.

Our past has been a great and glorious one. India could not have produced a heroine like the Rani of Jhansi, if she did not have a glorious tradition. . . . The greatness of Indian womanhood had its roots in those early days when India had its Sanskrit culture. The same India, which produced great women in the past also produced the Rani of Jhansi at a grave hour in India's history and today while we are facing the gravest hour in our history, I have confidence that Indian womanhood will not fail to rise to the occasion. If for the war of indepen-

dence of Jhansi, India had to produce, and it did produce, a Lakshmi Bai, today for the war of independence of the whole of India to liberate 38 crores of Indians, India has to produce and shall produce thousands of Ranis of Jhansi.

In the same way as we have figures like Maitreyi in India's ancient days, we have the inspiring examples of Ahalyabai of Maharashtra, Rani Bhawani of Bengal, Razia Begum and Noor Jehan, who were shining [female] administrators, in recent historic times prior to British rule in India.²⁹ I have every confidence in the fertility of the Indian soil. I am confident that India, as in the past, will also produce the best flowers of Indian womanhood.

When in 1921 a new political life started in India, thousands, nay lakhs, of our sisters also joined the movement and came forward to make sacrifices. In those days it was a great thing to go to prisons. Our Indian brothers and sisters got ready to undergo the ordeal of prison life. . . . Joining the Civil Disobedience Movement then meant willingness to face lathi charges and gun-fire and the Indians—not only men but also women—got ready to face lathi charges and gun-fire. I cannot forget an incident in Calcutta when we held a procession against the orders of the Government and when the police tried to break the procession by lathi charge, some of our sisters made a cordon around us (coming between us and the police) without flinching to face lathi charges. Thus, I have witnessed, while in India, how the spirit and determination of our sisters have been growing stage by stage.

Not only in the history of the Passive Resistance Movement but in the history of the Revolutionary Party also, we have the examples of our brave sisters who have played a noble part. I know of many sisters who became daring revolutionaries. If one type of courage was necessary for passive resistance, another and more active courage is necessary for revolutionary efforts, and in this too, I found that our sisters were not wanting. In 1931, an English Magistrate was shot dead by two girls; the age of one was 16, the age of the other was 17. In India, even ordinary men will shudder before Magistrates, but then two young sisters bravely went to the house of the Magistrate and fired at him. . . .

Since 1928, I have been taking interest in women's organizations in India and I found that, given the opportunity, our sisters could rise to any occasion. There was one *Rashtra Mahila Sangh* of ladies in Bengal, which did splendid work. In December 1928, a volunteer corps of 500 women was formed which was not only run on sound lines but their parades and their discipline gave us great hopes . . . that, given the impetus and opportunity, Indian women could perform duties entrusted to them in a befitting manner. . . . The way our sisters were progressing was remarkable.

And so when I began to undertake the task of guiding the Indian Independence Movement, I felt that our sisters should also be given the opportunity to serve India at this grave emergency. I consulted many, and I was told by some that though to raise a women's regiment might be possible in India, it would be an impossible task in East Asia. What they said did not affect my conviction and

my determination. And today, you have seen, before your own eyes, what our sisters have accomplished. . . .

I may at this juncture say a few words about the Rani of Jhansi. When the Rani of Jhansi started her fight, her age was only twenty. You can easily imagine what it would have been for a girl of twenty, riding a horse, and wielding her sword in open battle. You can easily realize what courage and spirit she must have had; the English Commander who fought against her said, "She was the best and bravest of the rebels." He made this admission because Jhansi Rani's bravery was something which he could not hide for he himself had to fight against her. First, she fought from the Jhansi Fort, and when the Fort was besieged, she escaped with a party to Kalpi. . . . [When] she had to retreat from this battlefield, she made an alliance with Tantia Topi, attacked and captured Gwalior Fort[,] . . . continued the battle and in this . . . great battle, she died fighting. . . . She died but her spirit can never die. India can once again produce Jhansi Ranis and march on to victory.

156 of our sisters are going to start their training in the camp, which is being opened today. But I hope that their number at Syonan will reach 1000 very soon. Training Camps for women have also been started in Thailand and Burma, but at Syonan, we have the Central Camp, and I feel that in this Central Camp we should at least have one thousand potential Ranis of Jhansi.

You have just now heard the brave words of the Commandant. . . . She expressed their determination to work ceaselessly . . . to get prepared for the onward March to Delhi. I feel joyous at hearing . . . "On to Delhi" from our sisters as I have been hearing it from our brothers.

[From "The Rani of Jhansi Regiment," in Subbha Chandra Bose, *Chalo Delhi: Writings and Speeches, 1943–1945*, ed. Sisir K. Bose and Sugaata Bose (Calcutta: Netaji Research Bureau, 2007), 124–127.]

ON THE GANDHI–JINNAH MEETING

This comment on Gandhi's misguided (as Bose felt) attempt to come to some accommodation with Jinnah was broadcast from somewhere in Burma on September 12, 1944. It embodies his analysis of the potential implications of the Rajaji formula, and of the result to which Gandhi's talks with Jinnah would lead.

Friends and Countrymen,

I want to talk to you today about the Indian situation. You are all aware that Gandhiji and Mr. Jinnah are discussing the Hindu–Muslim question in Bombay and that Gandhiji is prepared to come to an agreement with the League even if it means conceding the League demand of Pakistan. I know that you are all very anxious to know what we Indians abroad think about Gandhiji's attempt to pacify the League. It is clear that Gandhiji and other Congress leaders wish to compromise with Britain after settling with the League. We must act

instantly, if we are to prevent this. We Indians in East Asia are today fighting for a free and united India. We are resolved to liberate our motherland, and we are confident that we shall ultimately succeed. However long and bitter the struggle, we are convinced that truth and justice will finally triumph, and that our struggle for India's liberation will be successful. Therefore, we shall never be a party to any compromise with Britain. The very idea of a compromise with the British is repugnant to us; it will, we very strongly feel, mean the perpetuation of our slavery. Friends, we have resolved to create a united and free India; therefore, we shall oppose all attempts to divide her and cut her up into bits. Ireland and Palestine have taught us a lesson. We have realized that to divide a country will ruin her economically, culturally and politically. . . . We can easily solve the minority's problem once we are free from foreign domination. . . .

Personally, I have great respect for Mr. Jinnah. . . . But, I vehemently oppose the Pakistan scheme for the vivisection of our motherland.

During the first three years of the present war the Anglo-Americans have suffered one reverse after another. But they never thought of capitulation or surrender. They fought on with the hope that sooner or later their luck would turn, and their hope was justified. They have achieved many victories, but that will not make them slacken their war effort, nor does it mean that our allies will slacken their efforts or surrender. I suspect that there are some in India who believe that this is possible. They have been duped by the barrage of propaganda let loose on India and the world by the Anglo-Americans. . . .

We should not compromise with the British thinking that now they are winning because then it will be impossible to liberate our motherland. The agreement between the League and the Congress will be the forerunner of a compromise with Britain. If this should happen, India will remain a slave country forever. As long as the Congress and Muslim League are separated, there will be no compromise with the British. That is why the Congressmen who want to come to a compromise with Britain have decided to swallow the bitter pill of Pakistan. I wish to remind both the Congress and Muslim League leaders that even if there is an agreement between these two parties regarding the Pakistan issue, Britain will not grant freedom to India. They have already proved this by saying that the interests of the minorities and the princes should be safeguarded. Those who believe that a compromise between the Muslim League and the Congress will persuade Britain to grant India freedom are only deceiving themselves. That being so, I fail to see the necessity for rapprochement between the League and the Congress. I am sure that even if Pakistan is conceded, it will not solve our problem. The League will never fight the British as we do. All that it wants is the division of India into Hindu and Muslim States. There will be four Muslim States, which will remain under British influence. So, instead of a single slave India, we shall have four independent slave Muslim States siding with and abetting Britain. The British will ignore the Congress-League agreement, if it is against their interest in India. They will not relinquish

their hold on India. I ask the millions of Muslim young men . . . “Will you be a party to the vivisection of your motherland? What will your status be in a divided India?” Therefore, my friends, you must remember that if you want freedom you must fight for it. . . . There should be no compromise with Britain. Our divine motherland shall not be cut up.

Inquilab Zindabad [Long Live Revolution!]! Azad Hind Zindabad!

[From “On the Gandhi–Jinnah Meeting,”
in Subbha Chandra Bose, *Chalo Delhi*, 266–268.]

THE CABINET MISSION, MAY 16, 1946, AND CONGRESS’S RESPONSE

The Cabinet Mission Plan is discussed in the introduction to this chapter. Although Maulana Azad later wrote that this was the plan that should have been made to work, others, like historian S. R. Mehrotra, have argued that it was an unworkable plan, and thus—happily for India’s future, he felt—was doomed to fall apart.³⁰

THE LAST BRITISH OFFER

The text of the final plan is presented here.

1. On the 15th March last, just before the despatch of the Cabinet Mission to India, Mr. Attlee, the British Prime Minister, used these words:—

“My colleagues are going to India with the intention of using their utmost endeavours to help her to attain her freedom as speedily and fully as possible. What form of Government is to replace the present régime is for India to decide; but our desire is to help her to set up forthwith the machinery for making that decision. . . .

“I hope that the Indian people may elect to remain within the British Commonwealth. I am certain that she will find great advantages in doing so. . . . If she does so elect, it must be by her own free will. The British Commonwealth and Empire is not bound together by chains of external compulsion. It is a free association of free peoples. If, on the other hand, she elects for independence, in our view she has a right to do so. It will be for us to help to make the transition as smooth and easy as possible.”

2. Charged in these historic words, we—the Cabinet Ministers and the Viceroy—have done our utmost to assist the two main political parties to reach agreement upon the fundamental issue of the unity or division of India. After prolonged discussions in New Delhi we succeeded in bringing the Congress and the Muslim League together in conference at Simla. There was a full exchange of views and both parties were prepared to make considerable conces-

sions in order to try to reach a settlement, but it ultimately proved impossible to close the remainder of the gap between the parties and so no agreement could be concluded. Since no agreement has been reached, we feel that it is our duty to put forward what we consider are the best arrangements possible to ensure a speedy setting up of the new constitution. This statement is made with the full approval of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom.

3. We have accordingly decided that immediate arrangements should be made whereby Indians may decide the future constitution of India, and an interim Government may be set up at once to carry on the administration of British India until such time as a new constitution can be brought into being. We have endeavoured to be just to the smaller as well as to the larger sections of the people; and to recommend a solution which will lead to a practicable way of governing the India of the future, and will give a sound basis for defence and a good opportunity for progress in the social, political and economic field.

4. It is not intended in this statement to review the voluminous evidence which has been submitted to the Mission; but it is right that we should state that it has shown an almost universal desire, outside the supporters of the Muslim League, for the unity of India.

5. This consideration did not, however, deter us from examining closely and impartially the possibility of a partition of India; since we were greatly impressed by the very genuine and acute anxiety of the Muslims lest they should find themselves subjected to a perpetual Hindu-majority rule. This feeling has become so strong and widespread amongst the Muslims that it cannot be allayed by mere paper safeguards. If there is to be internal peace in India it must be secured by measures which will assure to the Muslims a control in all matters vital to their culture, religion, and economic or other interests.

6. We therefore examined in the first instance the question of a separate and fully independent sovereign state of Pakistan as claimed by the Muslim League. Such a Pakistan would comprise two areas: one in the North-West consisting of the provinces of the Punjab, Sind, North-West Frontier, and British Baluchistan; the other in the North-East consisting of the provinces of Bengal and Assam. The League were prepared to consider adjustment of boundaries at a later stage, but insisted that the principle of Pakistan should first be acknowledged. The argument for a separate state of Pakistan was based, first, upon the right of the Muslim majority to decide their method of government according to their wishes, and, secondly, upon the necessity to include substantial areas in which Muslims are in a minority, in order to make Pakistan administratively and economically workable.

The size of the non-Muslim minorities in a Pakistan comprising the whole of the six provinces enumerated above would be very considerable as the following figures show:—

	Muslim	Non-Muslim
North-Western Area—		
Punjab	16,217,242	12,201,577
North-West Frontier Province	2,788,797	249,270
Sind	3,208,325	1,326,683
British Baluchistan	438,930	62,701
	<u>22,653,294</u>	<u>13,840,231</u>
	62.07 per cent.	37.93 per cent.
North-Eastern Area—		
Bengal	33,005,434	27,301,091
Assam	3,442,479	6,762,254
	<u>36,447,913</u>	<u>34,063,345</u>
	51.69 per cent.	48.31 per cent.

The Muslim minorities in the remainder of British India number some 20 million dispersed amongst a total population of 188 million.

These figures show that the setting up of a separate sovereign state of Pakistan on the lines claimed by the Muslim League would not solve the communal minority problem; nor can we see any justification for including within a sovereign Pakistan those districts of the Punjab and of Bengal and Assam in which the population is predominantly non-Muslim. Every argument that can be used in favour of Pakistan can equally, in our view, be used in favour of the exclusion of the non-Muslim areas from Pakistan. This . . . would particularly affect the position of the Sikhs.

7. We, therefore, considered whether a smaller sovereign Pakistan confined to the Muslim majority areas alone might be a possible basis of compromise. Such a Pakistan is regarded by the Muslim League as quite impracticable because it would entail the exclusion from Pakistan of (a) the whole of the Ambala and Jullundur divisions in the Punjab; (b) the whole of Assam except the district of Sylhet; and (c) a large part of Western Bengal, including Calcutta, in which city the percentage of the Muslim population is 23.6 per cent. We ourselves are also convinced that any solution which involves a radical partition of the Punjab and Bengal, as this would do, would be contrary to the wishes and interests of a very large proportion of the inhabitants of these provinces. Bengal and the Punjab each has its own common language and a long history and tradition. Moreover, any division of the Punjab would of necessity divide the Sikhs, leaving substantial bodies of Sikhs on both sides of the boundary. We have therefore been forced to the conclusion that neither a larger nor a smaller sovereign state of Pakistan would provide an acceptable solution for the communal problem.

8. Apart from the great force of the foregoing arguments there are weighty administrative, economic and military considerations. The whole of the transportation and postal and telegraph systems of India have been established on the basis of a United India. To disintegrate them would gravely injure both parts of India. The case for a united defence is even stronger. The Indian Armed

Forces have been built up as a whole for the defence of India as a whole, and to break them in two would inflict a deadly blow on the long traditions and high degree of efficiency of the Indian Army and would entail the gravest dangers. The Indian Navy and Indian Air Force would become much less effective. The two sections of the suggested Pakistan contain the two most vulnerable frontiers in India and for a successful defence in depth the area of Pakistan would be insufficient.

9. A further consideration of importance is the greater difficulty which the Indian States would find in associating themselves with a divided British India.

10. Finally, there is the geographical fact that the two halves of the proposed Pakistan state are separated by some seven hundred miles and the communications between them both in war and peace would be dependent on the goodwill of Hindustan.

11. We are therefore unable to advise the British Government that the power which at present resides in British hands should be handed over to two entirely separate sovereign states.

12. This decision does not, however, blind us to the very real Muslim apprehensions that their culture and political and social life might become submerged in a purely unitary India, in which the Hindus with their greatly superior numbers must be a dominating element. To meet this the Congress have put forward a scheme under which provinces would have full autonomy subject only to a minimum of central subjects, such as foreign affairs, defence and communications.

Under this scheme provinces, if they wished to take part in economic and administrative planning on a large scale, could cede to the centre optional subjects in addition to the compulsory ones mentioned above.

13. Such a scheme would, in our view, present considerable constitutional disadvantages and anomalies. It would be very difficult to work a central executive and legislature in which some ministers, who dealt with compulsory subjects, were responsible to the whole of India while other ministers, who dealt with optional subjects, would be responsible only to those provinces who had elected to act together in respect of such subjects. This difficulty would be accentuated in the central legislature, where it would be necessary to exclude certain members from speaking and voting when subjects with which their provinces were not concerned were under discussion. Apart from the difficulty of working such a scheme, we do not consider that it would be fair to deny to other provinces, which did not desire to take the optional subjects at the centre, the right to form themselves into a group for a similar purpose. This would indeed be no more than the exercise of their autonomous powers in a particular way.

14. Before putting forward our recommendations we turn to deal with the relationship of the Indian States to British India. It is quite clear that with the attainment of independence by British India, whether inside or outside the British Commonwealth, the relationship which has hitherto existed between

the Rulers of the States and the British Crown will no longer be possible. Paramountcy can neither be retained by the British Crown nor transferred to the new government. This fact has been fully recognised by those whom we interviewed from the States. They have at the same time assured us that the States are ready and willing to co-operate in the new development of India. The precise form which their co-operation will take must be a matter for negotiation during the building up of the new constitutional structure and it by no means follows that it will be identical for all the States. We have not therefore dealt with the States in the same detail as the provinces of British India in the paragraphs which follow.

15. We now indicate the nature of a solution which in our view would be just to the essential claims of all parties and would at the same time be most likely to bring about a stable and practicable form of constitution for All-India.

We recommend that the constitution should take the following basic form:—

(1) There should be a Union of India, embracing both British India and the [Princely] States, which should deal with the following subjects: foreign affairs, defence, and communications; and should have the powers necessary to raise the finances required for the above subjects.

(2) The Union should have an executive and a legislature constituted from British Indian and States representatives. Any question raising a major communal issue in the legislature should require for its decision a majority of the representatives present and voting of each of the two major communities as well as a majority of all the members present and voting.

(3) All subjects other than the Union subjects and all residuary powers should vest in the provinces.

(4) The States will retain all subjects and powers other than those ceded to the Union.

(5) Provinces should be free to form groups with executives and legislatures, and each group could determine the provincial subjects to be taken in common.

(6) The constitutions of the Union and of the groups should contain a provision whereby any province could by a majority vote of its legislative assembly call for a reconsideration of the terms of the constitution after an initial period of ten years and at ten-yearly intervals thereafter.

16. It is not our object to lay out the details of a constitution on the above programme but to set in motion machinery whereby a constitution can be settled by Indians for Indians.

It has been necessary, however, for us to make this recommendation as to the broad basis of the future constitution because it became clear to us in the course of our negotiations that not until that had been done was there any hope of getting the two major communities to join in the setting up of the constitution-making machinery. . . .

We hope that the new independent India may choose to be a member of the British Commonwealth. We hope, in any event, that you will remain in close

and friendly association with our people. But these are matters for your own free choice. Whatever that choice may be, we look forward with you to your ever-increasing prosperity among the greatest nations of the world and to a future even more glorious than your past.

[From C. H. Philips, ed., *The Evolution of India and Pakistan*,
1858 to 1947, 355-360.]

CONGRESS'S RESPONSE TO THE PLAN

The Congress Working Committee came to the following resolution on May 24, 1946.

In considering the Statement [of 16 May], the Working Committee have kept in view the picture of the future, in so far as this was available to them from the proposals made for the formation of a Provisional Government and the clarification given by members of the Delegation. This picture is still incomplete and vague. It is only on the basis of the full picture that they can judge and come to a decision as to how far this is in conformity with the objectives they aim at. These objectives are: independence for India, a strong, though limited, central authority, full autonomy for the provinces, the establishment of a democratic structure in the centre and in the units, the guarantee of the fundamental rights of each individual so that he may have full and equal opportunities of growth, and further that each community should have opportunity to live the life of its choice within the larger framework.

The Committee regret to find a divergence between these objectives and the various proposals that have been made on behalf of the British Government, and, in particular, there is no vital change envisaged during the interim period when the Provisional Government will function, in spite of the assurance given in paragraph 23 of the Statement. If the independence of India is aimed at, then the functioning of the Provisional Government must approximate closely in fact, even though not in law, to that independence and all obstructions and hindrances to it should be removed. The continued presence of a foreign army of occupation is a negation of independence.

The Statement . . . suggests a procedure for the building up of a Constituent Assembly, which is sovereign in so far as the framing of the constitution is concerned. The Committee do not agree with some of those recommendations. In their view it will be open to the Constituent Assembly itself at any stage to make changes and variations, with the proviso that in regard to certain major communal matters a majority decision of both the major communities will be necessary. . . .

The Statement of the Cabinet Delegation affirms the basic principle of provincial autonomy and residuary powers vesting in the Provinces. It is further said that Provinces should be free to form groups. Subsequently, however, it is recommended that provincial representatives will divide up into sections which

“shall proceed to settle the Provincial Constitutions for the Provinces in each section and shall also decide whether any Group Constitution shall be set up for those Provinces.” There is a marked discrepancy in these two separate provisions, and it would appear that a measure of compulsion is introduced which clearly infringes the basic principle of provincial autonomy. In order to retain the recommendatory character of the Statement, and in order to make the clauses consistent with each other, the Committee read paragraph 15 to mean that, in the first instance, the respective provinces will make their choice whether or not to belong to the section in which they are placed. Thus the Constituent Assembly must be considered as a sovereign body with final authority for the purpose of drawing up a constitution and giving effect to it. . . . The provisions in the Statement in regard to the Indian States are vague. . . . A Provisional National Government . . . must be a precursor of the full independence that will emerge from the Constituent Assembly. It must function in recognition of that fact, though changes in law need not be made at this stage. The Governor-General may continue as the head of that Government during the interim period, but the Government should function as a cabinet responsible to the Central Legislature. The status, powers and composition of the Provisional Government should be fully defined in order to enable the Committee to come to a decision. Major communal issues shall be decided in the manner referred to above in order to remove any possible fear or suspicion from the minds of a minority.

[*India, Statement by the Cabinet Mission*, Cmd. 6835 (1946),
reprinted from C. H. Philips, ed., *The Evolution of India
and Pakistan, 1858 to 1947*, 382–384.]

DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR CONSIDERS PARTITION

As noted in the introduction, Dr. Ambedkar presented forceful arguments against any attempt to make a logical case for Pakistan. He did this, inter alia, by comparing India to other nations around the world composed of multiple communities. He maintained that there were many more reasons for sustaining its unity than for dividing the political community. But, he said, emotions, not reason, must be the deciding factor. If the Muslims—meaning Jinnah and the Muslim League and their supporters—passionately wanted Pakistan, then it had to be accepted. He felt that a nation of several communities—for example, a free and united India—had to have citizens and an army completely committed to it. Anything less would mean disaster. If the Muslims could not make this wholehearted commitment, they should be granted Pakistan.

MUST THERE BE A PAKISTAN?

I. With all that has gone before, the sceptic, the nationalist, conservative and the old world Indian will not fail to ask “Must there be Pakistan!?” . . . The

problem of Pakistan is indeed very grave and it must be admitted that the question is not only a relevant and fair one to be put to the Muslims and to their protagonists. . . . Its importance lies in the fact that the limitations on the case for Pakistan are so considerable in their force that they can never be easily brushed aside. . . . That being so, the burden of proof on the Muslims for establishing an imperative need in favour of Pakistan is very heavy. Indeed the issue of Pakistan or to put it plainly of partitioning India, is of such a grave character that the Muslims will not only have to discharge this burden of proof but they will have to adduce evidence of such a character as to satisfy the conscience of an international tribunal before they can win their case. . . .

II. Must there be Pakistan because a good part of the Muslim population of India happens to be concentrated in certain defined areas which can be easily severed from the rest of India? Muslim population is admittedly concentrated in certain well defined areas and it may be that these areas are severable. But what of that? In considering this question one must never lose sight of the fundamental fact that nature has made India one single geographical unit. Indians are of course quarreling and no one can prophesy when they will stop quarreling. . . . What does it establish? Only that Indians are a quarrelsome people. It does not destroy the fact that India is a single geographical unit. Her unity is as ancient as Nature. Within this geographic unit and covering the whole of it there has been a cultural unity from time immemorial. This cultural unity has defied political and racial divisions. And at any rate for the last hundred and fifty years all institutions cultural, political, economic, legal and administrative have been working on a single, uniform spring of action. In any discussion of Pakistan the fact [that] cannot be lost sight of . . . is the fundamental unity of India. For it is necessary to grasp the fact that there are really two cases of partition which must be clearly distinguished. There is a case in which the starting point is a pre-existing state of separation so that partition is only a dissolution of parts which were once separate and which were subsequently joined together. This case is quite different from another in which the starting point . . . is a state of unity. Consequently partition in such a case, is the severance of a territory which has been one single whole into separate parts. Where the starting point is not unity of territory, i.e., where there was disunity before there was unity, partition—which is only a return to the original—may not give a mental shock. But in India the starting point is unity. Why destroy its unity now, simply because some Muslims are dissatisfied? . . .

III. Must there be Pakistan because there is communal antagonism between the Hindus and the Muslims? That communal antagonism exists nobody can deny. The question however is, is the antagonism such that there is no will to live together in one country and under one constitution. Surely that will to live together was not absent till 1937. During the formulation of the provisions of the Government of India Act 1935 both Hindus and Musalmans accepted the view that they must live together under one constitution and in one country and

participated in the discussions that preceded the passing of the Act. And what was the state of communal feeling in India between . . . say 1920 and 1935 . . . ? The history of India from 1920 up to 1935 has been one long tale of communal conflict in which the loss of life and loss of property had reached a most shameful limit. Never was the communal situation so acute as it was between this period of 15 years preceding the passing of the Government of India Act 1935, and yet this long tale of antagonism did not prevent the Hindus and the Musalmans from agreeing to live in a single country and under a single constitution. Why make so much of communal antagonism now? . . .

Obviously India is not the only place where there is communal antagonism. If communal antagonism does not come in the way of the French in Canada living in political unity with the English, if it does not come in the way of the English in South Africa living in political unity with the Dutch, if it does not come in the way of the French and the Italians in Switzerland living in political unity with the Germans why then should it be impossible for the Hindus and the Muslims to agree to live together under one constitution in India?

IV. Must there be Pakistan because the Muslims have lost faith in the Congress majority? As reasons for the loss of faith Muslims cite some instances of tyranny and oppression practised by the Hindus and connived at by the Congress Ministries during the two years and three months the Congress was in office. Unfortunately Mr. Jinnah did not persist in his demand for a Royal Commission to inquire into these grievances. If he had done it we could have known what truth there was in these complaints. A perusal of these instances, as given in the reports of the Muslim League Committees, leaves upon the reader the impression that although there may be some truth in the allegations there is a great deal which is pure exaggeration. The Congress Ministries concerned have issued statements repudiating the charges. It may be that the Congress during the two years and three months that it was in office did not show statesmanship, did not inspire confidence in the minorities, nay tried to suppress them. But can it be a reason for partitioning India? . . . May it not be that if the Congress returns to office it will profit by the mistakes it has made, revise its mischievous policy and . . . allay the fear created by its . . . conduct?

V. Must there be Pakistan because the Musalmans are a nation?—It is a pity that Mr. Jinnah should have become a votary and a champion of Muslim Nationalism at a time when the whole world is decrying against the evils of nationalism and is seeking refuge in some kind of international organization. Mr. Jinnah is so obsessed with his new-found faith in Muslim Nationalism that he is not prepared to see that there is a distinction between a Society, parts of which are disintegrated, and a Society parts of which have become only loose, [a distinction] which no sane man can ignore. When a society is disintegrating—and the two nation theory is a positive disintegration of society and country—it is evidence of the fact that there do not exist what Carlyle calls “organic filaments”—i.e., the vital forces which work to bind together the parts that are

cut asunder. In such cases disintegration can only be regretted. It cannot be prevented. Where, however, such organic filaments do exist, it is a crime to overlook them and deliberately force the disintegration of society and country as the Muslims seem to be doing. . . . But isn't there enough that is common to both Hindus and Musalmans, which if developed, is capable of moulding them into one people? Nobody can deny that there are many modes, manners, rites and customs which are common to both. Nobody can deny that there are rites, customs and usages based on religion which do divide Hindus and Musalmans. The question is, which of these should be emphasized. If the emphasis is laid on things that are common, there need be no two nations in India. If the emphasis is laid on points of difference, it will no doubt give rise to two nations. The view that seems to guide Mr. Jinnah is that Indians are only a people and that they can never be a Nation. . . . Granted Indians are not a nation, that they are only a people. What of that? History records that before the rise of nations as great corporate personalities, there were only peoples. There is nothing to be ashamed if Indians are no more than a people. Nor is there any cause for despair that the people of India—if they wish—will not become one nation. For, as Disraeli said, a nation is a work of art and a work of time. If the Hindus and Musalmans agree to emphasize the things that bind them and forget those that separate them there is no reason why in course of time they should not grow into a nation. It may be that their nationalism may not be quite so integrated as that of the French or the Germans. But they can . . . produce a common state of mind on common questions which is the sum total which the spirit of nationalism helps to produce and for which it is so much prized. Is it right for the Muslim League to emphasize only differences and ignore altogether the forces that bind? Let it not be forgotten that if two nations come into being it will not be because it is predestined. It will be the result of deliberate design. . . .

VI. Must there be Pakistan because otherwise Swaraj will be a Hindu Raj? . . . It is a very strange sort of conscience. There are really millions of Musalmans in India who are living under unbridled and uncontrolled Hindu Raj of Hindu Princes and no objection to it has been raised by the Muslims or the Muslim League. . . .

The political objections to Hindu Raj rest on various grounds. The first ground is that Hindu society is not a democratic society. True, it is not. It may not be right to ask whether the Muslims have taken any part in the various movements for reforming Hindu society as distinguished from proselytising. But it is right to ask if the Musalmans are the only sufferers from the evils that admittedly result from the undemocratic character of Hindu society. Are not the millions of Shudras and non-Brahmins or millions of the Untouchables, suffering the worst consequences of the undemocratic character of Hindu society? Who benefits from education, from public service and from political reforms except the Hindu governing class—composed of the higher castes of the Hindus—which form not even 10 per cent of the total Hindu population? Has not the

governing class of the Hindus . . . shown more regard for safeguarding the rights and interests of the Musalmans than they have for safeguarding the rights and interests of the Shudras and the Untouchables? Is not Mr. Gandhi, who is determined to oppose any political concession to the Untouchables, ready to sign a blank cheque in favour of the Muslims? . . .

Is it proposed that the Hindu Raj should be the rule of a naked Communal majority? Are not the Musalmans granted safeguards against the possible tyranny of the Hindu majority? Are not the safeguards given to the Musalmans of India wider and better than the safeguards which have been given to the French in Canada, to the English in South Africa and to the French and the Italians in Switzerland? To take only one item from the list of safeguards. Haven't the Musalmans got an enormous degree of weightage in representation in the Legislature? . . .

If Hindu Raj does become a fact, it will, no doubt, be the greatest calamity for this country. No matter what the Hindus say, Hinduism is a menace to liberty, equality and fraternity. On that account it is incompatible with democracy. Hindu Raj must be prevented at any cost. But is Pakistan the true remedy against it? What makes communal Raj possible is a marked disproportion in the relative strength of the various communities living in a country. As pointed out above, this disproportion is not more marked in India than it is in Canada, South Africa and Switzerland. Nonetheless there is no British Raj in Canada, no Dutch Raj in South Africa, and no German Raj in Switzerland. How have the French, the English and the Italians succeeded in preventing the Raj of the majority community being established in their country? . . . What is their method? Their method is to put a ban on communal parties in politics. No Community in Canada, South Africa or Switzerland ever thinks of starting a separate communal party. What is important to note is that it is the minority nations which have taken the lead in opposing the formation of a communal party. For they know that if they form a communal political party the major community will also form a Communal party and the majority community will thereby find it easy to establish its Communal Raj. It is a vicious method of self-protection. . . .

Have the Muslims thought of this method of avoiding Hindu Raj? Have they considered how easy it is to avoid it? Have they considered how futile and harmful the present policy of the League is? The Muslims are howling against the Hindu Mahasabha and its slogan of Hindudom and Hindu Raj. But who is responsible for this? Hindu Mahasabha and Hindu Raj are [the] inescapable nemesis which the Musalmans have brought upon themselves by having a Muslim League. It is action and counteraction. One gives rise to the other. Not partition, but the abolition of the Muslim League and the formation of a mixed party of Hindus and Muslims is the only effective way of burying the ghost of Hindu Raj. It is, of course, not possible for Muslims and other Minority Parties to join the Congress or the Hindu Mahasabha so long as the disagreement on

the question of constitutional safeguards continues. But this question will be settled, is bound to be settled and there is every hope that the settlement will result in securing to the Muslims and other Minorities the safeguards they need. Once this consummation, which we so devoutly wish, takes place nothing can stand in the way of a party re-alignment, of the Congress and the Mahasabha breaking up and of Hindus and Musalmans forming mixed political parties based on an agreed programme of social and economic regeneration and, thereby avoid the danger of both Hindu Raj or Muslim Raj becoming a fact. Nor should the formation of a mixed party of Hindus and Muslims be difficult in India. There are many lower orders in the Hindu society whose economic, political and social needs are the same as those of the majority of the Muslims and they would be far more ready to make a common cause with the Muslims for achieving common ends than they would with the high caste of Hindus who have denied and deprived them of ordinary human rights for centuries. To pursue such a course cannot be called an adventure. The path along that line is a well trodden path. Is it not a fact that under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms in most Provinces, if not in all, the Muslims, the Non-Brahmins and the Depressed Classes united together and worked the reforms as members of one team from 1920 to 1937? Herein lay the most fruitful method of achieving communal harmony among Hindus and Muslims and of destroying the danger of a Hindu Raj. Mr. Jinnah could have easily pursued this line. . . . He has the ability to organize. He had the reputation of a nationalist. Even many Hindus who were opposed to the Congress would have flocked to him if he had only sent out a call for a united party of like-minded Hindus and Muslims. What did Mr. Jinnah do? In 1937 Mr. Jinnah made his entry into Muslim politics and strangely enough he regenerated the Muslim League. . . . Everybody felt that with the leadership of Mr. Jinnah the League could never become a merely communal party. The Resolutions passed by the League during the first two years of its new career indicated that it would develop into a mixed political party of Hindus and Muslims. . . .

Mr. Jinnah showed that he was for common front between the Muslims and other Non-Muslim minorities. Unfortunately the catholicity and statesmanship that underlies these resolutions did not last long. In 1939 Mr. Jinnah took a somersault and outlined the dangerous and disastrous policy of isolation of the Musalmans by passing that notorious resolution in favour of Pakistan. What is the reason for this isolation? Nothing but the change of view that the Musalmans were a nation and not a community!! One need not quarrel over the question whether the Muslims are a nation or a community. But one finds it extremely difficult to understand how the mere fact that the Muslims are a nation makes political isolation a safe and sound policy. . . . But let Muslims consider what Mr. Jinnah has achieved by making the Muslim League, the only organization for the Musalmans. It may be that it has helped him to avoid the possibility of having to play the second fiddle. For inside the Muslim camp he can always be

sure of the first place for himself. But how does the League hope to save by this plan of isolation the Muslims from Hindu Raj? Will Pakistan obviate the establishment of Hindu Raj in Provinces in which the Musalmans are in a minority? Obviously it cannot. This is what would happen in the Muslim-minority Provinces if Pakistan came. Take an All-India view. Can Pakistan prevent the establishment of Hindu Raj at the centre over Muslim minorities that will remain in Hindustan? It is plain that it cannot. What good is Pakistan then? Only to prevent Hindu Raj in Provinces in which the Muslims are in a majority and in which there could never be Hindu Raj!! To put it differently Pakistan is unnecessary to Muslims where they are in a majority because there, there is no fear of Hindu Raj. It is worse than useless to Muslims where they are in a minority, because Pakistan or no Pakistan they will have to face a Hindu Raj. The Muslim League started to help minority Muslims and has ended by espousing the cause of majority Muslims. What a perversion in the original aim of the Muslim League! . . .

VII . . . What I feel like asking the critics is . . . Do they expect the Musalmans to give up Pakistan if they are defeated in a controversy over the virtues of Pakistan? . . . It may be that the Musalmans will agree, as most rational people do, to have their case for Pakistan decided by the tests of reason and argument. But I should not be surprised if the Muslims decided to adopt the method of Dr. Johnson and say "Damn your arguments! We want Pakistan." In that event the critic must realize that any reliance placed upon the limitations for destroying the case for Pakistan will be of no avail. . . .

Let me now turn to the other question which I said the critic is entitled to put to me. What is my position regarding the issue of Pakistan in the light of the objections, which I have set out? . . . If the Musalmans are bent on having Pakistan then it must be conceded to them. I know my critics will at once accuse me of inconsistency and will demand reasons for so extraordinary a conclusion—extraordinary because of the view expressed by me in the earlier part of this chapter that the Muslim case for Pakistan has nothing in it which can be said to carry the compelling force which the decree of an inexorable fate may be said to have. I withdraw nothing from what I have said. . . . Yet I hold that if the Muslims must have Pakistan there is no escape from conceding it to them. . . . In my judgment there are two governing factors which must determine the issue. . . . One cannot ignore that what is important is not the winning of independence but the having of the sure means of maintaining it. The ultimate guarantee of the independence of a country is a safe army—an army on which you can rely to fight for the country at all times and in any eventuality. The army in India must necessarily be a mixed army composed of Hindus and Muslims. If India is invaded by a foreign power, can the Muslims in the Army be trusted to defend India? Suppose the invaders are their co-religionists. Will the Muslims side with the invaders or will they stand against them and save India?

This is a very crucial question. Obviously, the answer to this question must depend upon to what extent the Muslims in the Army have caught the infection of the two-nation theory, which is the foundation of Pakistan. If they are infected, then the Army in India cannot be safe. . . . Indians will be able to defend a free India on one and one condition alone—namely if the Army in India remains non-political, unaffected by the poison of Pakistan. I want to warn Indians against the most stupid habit that has grown up in this country of discussing the question of Swaraj without reference to the question of the Army. Nothing can be more fatal than the failure to realize that a political Army is the greatest danger to the liberty of India. . . .

Equally important is the fact that the Army is the ultimate sanction which sustains Government in the exercise of its authority inside the country, when it is challenged by a rebellious or recalcitrant element. Suppose the Government of the day enunciates a policy which is vehemently opposed by a section of the Muslims. Suppose the Government of the day is required to use its Army to enforce its policy. Can the Government of the day depend upon the Muslims in the Army to obey its orders and shoot down the Muslim rebels? . . .

Turning to the second governing factor[,] the Hindus do not seem to attach any value to sentiment as a force in politics. The Hindus seem to rely upon two grounds to win against the Muslims. The first is that even if the Hindus and the Muslims are two nations, they can live under one state. The other is that the Muslim case for Pakistan is founded on strong sentiment rather than upon clear argument. . . . That the Muslim case for Pakistan is founded on sentiment is far from being a matter of weakness; it is really its strong point. It does not need deep understanding of politics to know that the workability of a constitution is not a matter of theory. It is a matter of sentiment. . . . If a constitution does not please, then however perfect it may be, it will not work. To have a constitution which runs counter to the strong sentiments of a determined section is to court disaster if not to invite rebellion. . . .

The Non-Muslims do not seem to be aware that they are presented with a situation in which they are forced to choose between various alternatives. . . . In the first place they have to choose between Freedom of India and the Unity of India. If the Non-Muslims will insist on the Unity of India they put the quick realization of India's freedom into jeopardy. The second choice relates to the surest method of defending India, whether they can depend upon Muslims in a free and united India to develop and sustain along with the Non-Muslims the necessary will to defend the common liberties of both; or whether it is better to partition India and thereby ensure the safety of Muslim India by leaving its defence to the Muslims and of Non-Muslim India by leaving its defence to Non-Muslims. As to the first, I prefer Freedom of India to the Unity of India. . . .

On the second issue I prefer the partitioning of India into Muslim India and Non-Muslim India as the surest and safest method of providing for the defence

of both. . . . To leave so important an issue, as the defence of India, to chance is to be guilty of the grossest crime.

Nobody will consent to the Muslim demand for Pakistan unless he is forced to do so. . . . It would be a folly not to face what is inevitable and face it with courage and common sense. Equally would it be a folly to lose the part one can retain in the vain attempt of preserving the whole.

These are the reasons why I hold that if the Musalmans will not yield on the issue of Pakistan then Pakistan must come. So far as I am concerned the only important question is: Are the Musalmans determined to have Pakistan? . . . Or does it represent their permanent aspiration? On this there may be difference of opinion. Once it becomes certain that the Muslims want Pakistan there can be no doubt that the wise course would be to concede the principle of it.

[From B. R. Ambedkar, *Pakistan; or, The Partition of India* (Bombay: Thacker and Company, 1945), 343–345, 348–350, 352–364.]

GURBACHAN SINGH AND LAL SINGH GYANI: THE SIKHS' DILEMMA

Although the Sikhs of India numbered only about six million, they were the second-largest minority in India after the Muslims, and the one most disastrously affected by the partition. Perhaps they did not have the greatest number killed or the most property losses in absolute terms, but they were spread out in the Punjab, their longtime homeland, and mixed in with Muslims and Hindus on both sides of the eventual dividing line. When the division came, and animosities and killing raged, it became clear to British officials and to the Sikhs themselves that they would have to move in large numbers and make their place in India. They gave up rich agricultural lands and urban livelihoods and property. With a long history of adaptability, they did not move to squatter camps to live in poverty for the rest of their lives. More than any other refugees of the partition, they moved not only to East Punjab, but also throughout India, wherever they could make a good living. They also moved to the United Kingdom and later to the United States in considerable numbers. Eventually they gained their own state in the Indian Union, with Panjabi its state language and Chandigarh its capital (though shared with Haryana).

While the negotiations for the transfer of power were going on in the 1940s, the Sikhs were divided and torn. They hoped to have a large part of the Punjab, all the land east of the Chenab River, given to India. But the "other factors" to be taken into account by the boundary commission chaired by Sir Cyril Radcliffe did not weigh enough to give such a large part of the Punjab to India. Lahore and about 62 percent of the land and 55 percent of the population of the Punjab went to Pakistan, and the Sikhs had to stay there or move. Feeling, not unreasonably, that they would be slaughtered if they stayed, they moved.

Alan Campbell-Johnson, Mountbatten's press attaché, wrote in his account of June 14, 1947:

We are in the heart of Sikh country here, and the prevailing atmosphere is one of tension and foreboding . . . they [the Sikhs] see the partition of India means substantially and irrevocably the partition of the Sikhs, and they feel themselves to be sacrificed on the altars of Muslim ambition and Hindu opportunism . . . No juggling of the Boundary Commission can prevent their bisection. They react accordingly and their leaders, hopelessly outmanoeuvred in the political struggle, begin to invoke more primitive methods.³¹

The Sikhs had started as a small group of Punjabi agriculturalists who followed a Guru with ideas slightly different from local religious practices of the fifteenth century; Guru Nanak wanted to go beyond existing religions to find and worship the one formless God. The Sikhs grew into a small religious group that eventually had to organize as a community, the Panth, for self-defense. After a history of frequent political clashes with the Mughal emperors, when the Mughals went into decline the Sikhs moved to control the Punjab. Under the leadership of Ranjit Singh, they continued their sovereignty over this area well into the nineteenth century. After Ranjit Singh's death, they came under pressure from the expanding British Raj: when two Sikh wars ended in 1849, the Sikh kingdom was incorporated into the British Empire. The days of independence and control in the Punjab, and their living sense of a community, remained in their memories and imaginations, for new possibilities seemed to open up with the imminent departure of the British. Some writers and leaders advocated a sovereign and independent Sikh state carved out from the Punjab, as do the two authors here. They put forth passionate arguments, but these could not outweigh the numbers calculated by the boundary-deciders, and the idea of a separate Sikh state did not go anywhere. Neither did the idea of an independent Bengal. The men with the power to decide did not want further fragmentation of the subcontinent, which Mountbatten and Nehru referred to as the "balkanization" of India.

DEMANDING A SIKH STATE

The ideas presented by Gurbachan Singh and Lal Singh Gyani—who in 1946 were teachers at the Sikh National College, Lahore, and the Sikh Missionary College, Amritsar, respectively—lived on in the agitation for a Punjabi state in the Indian Union and in the movement for Khalistan.

This booklet is an attempt to present . . . the demand which the Sikh people have formulated for being given a State in their Homeland, the Punjab. This particular demand, which in its essence is quite old, [is] . . . put forth with full vigour by the Sikhs all over the Punjab and outside, and is at present the national political objective of the Sikh people. . . . The Sikhs have arrived at the objective of demanding a State for themselves after making trial of safeguards, communal settlements and various kinds of guarantees. With the best of intentions,

constitutional safeguards and guarantees cannot be sufficient to protect smaller peoples these days against powerful and organised majorities. . . . The pressure of majorities tells. The Sikhs are keenly alive, on the basis of the experience of the past, to the danger of living in a state of permanent dependence upon the rule of any majority—Hindu, Muslim or other. They have, therefore, made up their mind . . . to carve out a State . . . in which they can be independent, free from interference and suppression. . . .

Democracy as a political system is good within homogeneous societies, but where permanent and unalterable barriers exist, unadulterated democracy proves ruinous to small groups, which are placed permanently in a position of helplessness. For the minorities only one democratic safeguard is adequate, and that is that the majority agree to shed its character of majority and accept a position of parity with the minority. Unless such willingness is forthcoming on the part of the Muslims in the Punjab it is apparent that the Sikhs have no reason to feel secure. The only alternative to such an arrangement is the splitting up of the Punjab, and carving the Sikh State out of its present boundaries.

The Sikh demand is not based upon the spirit of aggressive communalism. It is the only effective scheme for survival which they can think of in these critical days of communal bitterness and imminent persecution and attempt at extermination or absorption. The Sikhs make an appeal to the conscience of the world to recognize their right of survival and to give them that self-determination which is the admitted right of nations all over the world. . . .

The Panth [community] notes . . . that in a situation so greatly charged with aggressive communalism, the minorities, and especially the Sikhs, find themselves placed in a position in which they cannot safeguard their national existence against the high-handedness of a politically organised communal majority, which conviction is further strengthened by the experience of the working of Provincial Autonomy for nine years, resulting in grave attacks being made on the cultural, civic and political rights of the Sikhs in the Punjab. . . .

In order to ensure the free and unfettered growth of the Sikh Panth, the Panth demands the splitting up of the existing province of the Punjab, with its unnatural boundaries, so as to constitute a separate autonomous Sikh State in those areas of the Central, Northern, Eastern and South-Eastern Punjab in which the overwhelming part of the Sikh population is concentrated, and which because of the proprietors in it being mostly Sikhs, and its general character being distinctly Sikh, is also the de facto Sikh Homeland—the area, extent, the status and constitutional frame-work of such a State being left to be settled by negotiation between the . . . representatives of the Sikh Panth and the other . . . parties, such as the British[,] . . . the Hindus and the Muslims. . . . The above demand is the unconditional, absolute and minimum demand . . . of the Sikh Panth. . . .

This feeling of the urgent need of a separate state has been growing upon the Sikhs now for close upon two decades. . . . The problem of any political future had not come before the people so clearly as it came when after survey of the Simon Commission [1928] it became evident that some kind of constitutional

changes were imminent. The Muslims began to clamour for a permanent, unalterable Muslim majority in the future legislature of the Punjab. In the event of this Muslim demand being accepted the Sikhs saw for themselves a very dark future, for they would never be able to make their voice effective in the administration of the province. . . . The Sikhs in this situation cast about for some way of safeguarding their national existence; and carving a new province out of the existing province of the Punjab was the solution . . . which they suggested in 1930 to Mahatma Gandhi, in 1931 to the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, and in the same year, to Lord Willingdon, his successor. In placing this proposal for the solution of the Sikh problem, and incidentally, the communal problem of India, all parties among the Sikhs were united. . . . The same suggestion . . . was presented to the British Government at the 2nd Round Table Conference. . . .

The demand at that stage was, however, not for a separate Sikh State; it was for the splitting up of the Punjab, so as to alienate some Western Districts with an overwhelming Muslim majority from the province and to leave a smaller province, also more compact and homogeneous, from which the pressure of a permanent Muslim majority would be lifted. It was this demand which later on grew to be the well-known Azad Punjab Demand and has been put forward at present as the demand for an independent Sikh State.

The Sikh demand was nothing very novel or impracticable. It was fully in line with what both the British Government and the Congress had admitted in principle and later in practice in some parts. The Congress had already visualized the redistribution of the existing Indian provinces into 21, on the basis of language, while the British Government had on several occasions actually shifted the boundaries of provinces, as when Eastern Bengal and Assam were constituted into one province and the North-Western Frontier Province and Delhi were separated from the Punjab. . . . The Sikh demand, however, went unheeded and the Communal Award was given, which saddled a permanent unalterable Muslim majority on the Punjab. The strongest and bitterest opposition to this iniquitous piece of constitution-making came from the Sikhs, out of all the political groups in India. Then came Provincial Autonomy, as a result of which the Muslim-dominated Unionist Party was installed in the seat of Government in the Punjab. Under Provincial Autonomy the Sikhs suffered terrible hardships. Their religious and cultural rights were wantonly attacked, their proper share in the services was denied to them, and they were thwarted in every sphere of life. Their national language, Punjabi, was suppressed and discouraged; the administration of the Gurdwaras was sought to be interfered with, and Sikhs were persecuted by the emboldened Muslim fanatics in several parts of the Punjab. . . .

In 1940 came the Pakistan Resolution of the All-India Muslim League. This was only a symbol of the rising aggressive intentions of the Muslims, whose ambition to rule over and dominate others was now only too manifest. . . . The Congress sought to appease the Muslims at the cost of the Sikhs, and while taking exception to the Sikhs organizing themselves in self-defence, encouraged

and accommodated Muslim Communalism. The Sikhs at that time felt that national survival and an honourable existence for them were possible . . . only in a tract where they would not be at the mercy of a constitutional majority of any other group. In this situation emerged a further step in the old Sikh demand for splitting up of the Punjab, called the Azad Punjab Scheme. This scheme visualized the constituting of a new province, out of the Lahore, Jullundur, Ambala, and part of the Multan Divisions, in which area the Sikhs would be able to have an effective voice in the administration. In this area the Sikhs would hold the balance of power. This scheme was presented as the Sikh demand to Sir Stafford Cripps by the Sikh leaders in 1942, while rejecting the Pakistan demand. . . . The Shromani Akali Dal, the National political organization of the Sikhs, demanded the establishment of Azad Punjab by its Resolution dated the 7th June, 1943.

When the famous Gandhi–Raja[ji] Formula was floated, according to which the Muslim aspiration for Pakistan was to be accommodated, after separating the non-Muslim majority areas from the absolute Muslim majority areas, the Sikhs saw that according to this suggestion, the Sikhs would be divided into two—one part of them bottled up in Muslim Punjab and the other in Hindu India, both dominated by overwhelming non-Sikh majorities. Such a situation would put an end to the integrity of the Sikh nation for ever. . . . So the Panthic Gathering which assembled at Amritsar on the 20th August 1944 . . . made the demand for the establishment of the Azad Sikh State in the event of Pakistan being established. . . . The Sikh aspiration . . . has been to establish a democratic state, in which the liberal and socialistic Sikh basis of life should be made the basis of general civic life.

Since the meeting of the Panthic Gathering the demand for the establishment of the Azad Sikh State has come from Sikh Sangats all over India. It has caught also the younger generation. . . . The demand has found support from the Communist Party of India. The Communists have supported the Sikh claim to a separate autonomous area under the name Sikh Homelands, where they can develop unhindered culturally and politically, on progressive and democratic lines. . . .

The Sikhs find that while the Muslim is hostile to them with all the bitter memories of the Sikh–Muslim-struggles handed down from history, the Hindu Nationalism, especially its Punjab brand, has tried to disrupt the Sikhs, to break up their unity and to reabsorb them into Hinduism. Without political strength no minority can survive, especially in the present-day world of total organization and mobilization of peoples. The only way, therefore, in which the Sikhs can escape the fate of such almost extinct peoples as the Parsis, the Jews, the Jains and others is that they carve out for themselves a state in which they can make laws and be free from aggression. . . .

The Sikhs organized as “the Khalsa” acted as a distinct, separate nation in the days of the Misals [fighting bands] and under Ranjit Singh and after. The

Khalsa is the name conferred by Guru Gobind Singh upon a people knit together by faith in a common religious Scripture and religious preceptors, in a certain way of life, marked by the institution of the community kitchen or langar and a puritanical, military organization and having a supreme seat of authority and legislation in the Akal Takht at Amritsar. Guru Har Gobind, the Sixth Guru and Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Guru, who organized the Sikhs for fighting Moghal Imperialism, gave them all the qualities and attributes of a nation—all that makes a people active, alive and able to maintain a rigorous political character. . . . The Sikh people were at first theocratic in their political organization, submitting later to the monarchical dispensation, and now they are organizing their national life on a democratic basis like the other Indian nationalities. The Sikhs have all through history acted as a separate nation, with a distinct polity, outlook and political objective. . . .

So long as the Sikhs remained independent, they maintained in theory as well as in fact a distinct national political existence. They dominated the political scene in the Punjab, in the North-Western and South-Western parts of what is now known as the United Provinces, in Kashmere, in the Province of Peshawar and in other parts. They negotiated as a sovereign people with the Government of the East India Company in India and with . . . other Eastern countries.

When British rule came, the British Imperial Government set about the task of destroying and obliterating the vestiges of Sikh nationhood. The Sikh democratic way of life was suppressed, and the Gurdwaras, centres of the Sikh national life, were placed in the hands of hereditary priests, who tried as far as practicable, to dilute this Sikh feeling. . . . The Panth was no longer a living, vigorous nation, but a herd of unorganized people led by corrupt priests and hereditary aristocrats, selfish tools of British Imperialism.

The Sikh revival from this state of prostration dates from the great days of the Gurdwara Reform Movement,³² which made the Sikhs aware after nearly three quarters of a century of atrophied national existence, of their great and splendid heritage of being the Khalsa, the Pure, the Elect, the band of Guru Gobind Singh, Lord of the Hawks. It aroused in the Sikhs the feeling that they were meant for a higher destiny than that which appeared to be marked out for them under the two-fold domination of the British rule and their own priesthood. So they resumed in those critical days the entire consciousness, organization and paraphernalia of completely developed nationhood. . . . The Khalsa is essentially a political conception, a fusion of the people into a nation on the basis of religion—a conquest not political, but spiritual, through conversion to faith. . . .

The Hindus of the 19th century turned the defeat and misery of Sikhs to their own account. Hindu propaganda spread the view that the Sikhs were Hindus, and so great was the confusion of thought that so many Sikhs lost along with their feeling of nationhood, even the faith of their ancestors. Little was done at the time by the Sikh leaders to combat this evil. Later, in the 20th century, with

the rise of the Congress as the dominant force on the Indian political scene, emerged the conception of the "Indian Nation" of which all Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others were component groups and were to be styled as mere "communities." From this feeling of being a community the Sikhs have taken very long to emerge. The Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh, the Commonwealth of the Elect, the erstwhile conquerors and rulers of the Punjab, Kashmere, Peshawar and Lower Tibet, the people who alone in India had developed all the distinct attributes of nationhood, and had lived as a nation were content to be styled as a "community," and relegated to a very back seat indeed in this group of communities. The Sikhs have, however, now emerged from the illusion of being a community . . . and have formed the true conception of their status, and demanded a National State. . . .

At present to a Sikh there never is any doubt that he belongs to a different nationality from that to which, for example, a Hindu belongs. As soon as one turns Sikh, one is a changed person. His group-consciousness undergoes a change. Conversion to Sikhism is not a mere incident in his life; it is a complete transformation of outlook and personality. One's hopes and aspirations, one's entire pattern of life, one's political ideals—all acquire a new synthesis of which the component elements are the distinctive Sikh way of life and the Sikh feeling of oneness as a nation all over the world, irrespective of the country where any Sikh may at the moment be residing.

[From Gurbachan Singh and Lal Singh Gyani, *The Idea of the Sikh State* (Lahore: Lahore Book Shop, 1946), vi–viii, 1–3, 5–21.]

SARAT CHANDRA BOSE TAKES THE LEAD: EFFORTS FOR A UNITED BENGAL

A Bengali political leader involved in the Indian nationalist movement in the first half of the twentieth century, Sarat Chandra Bose (1889–1950) was an elder brother of the more charismatic Subhas Chandra Bose (1897–1945). Both attended Presidency College, Calcutta.

Sarat Bose was called to the bar from Lincoln's Inn and had a lucrative legal career before the Calcutta High Court. The political activity of Subhas Bose drew his older brother into nationalist politics and Calcutta affairs. Sarat Bose became a stalwart of the nationalized Calcutta Corporation, or city government, and a leader of the Bengal Congress in legislative affairs.

Along with other Congress leaders, Sarat Bose was arrested in 1932, and was not freed until 1935. A lover of Shakespeare with a degree in English literature, he read all the major works of the Russian novelists of the nineteenth century while imprisoned. But prison conditions caused his health to deteriorate, and he was finally released in 1935.

In 1938 Subhas Bose returned from abroad to become Congress president, and Sarat Bose assumed leadership of the opposition in the Bengal Legislative Assembly.

A conflict with Gandhi led to Subhas Bose's resignation from his Congress leadership post in 1939, and then to his suspension for disobeying Congress strictures about demonstrations. Sarat Bose continued to play an important role in Bengal politics until December 1941, when events in World War II changed everything.

Believing that the British would never leave India peacefully, Subhas Bose secretly left the country in January 1941 and made his way to Germany. Because his younger brother was working with the enemy, and he himself was secretly meeting the Japanese consul general in Calcutta, Sarat Bose was imprisoned from 1941 to 1945. When he was arrested, Sarat Bose was in the process of forming a coalition government in Bengal with the Muslim leader Fazlul Huq. His imprisonment was a setback to Hindu-Muslim relations, and also severely damaged his health. He had a fever throughout these long years in prison, and never fully recovered.

Upon his release in 1945, he organized the Congress election campaign in 1945–1946, and was briefly a cabinet minister in the interim government in 1946. As the Congress moved toward acceptance of a division of India on the basis of religion, Sarat Bose, to whom this was anathema, worked to prevent such an outcome.

With the secretary of the Muslim League, Abul Hashim, Sarat Bose put forward a scheme for a united Bengal. But it failed to gain popular support, as communal riots spread through India. Jinnah approved of it because he hoped it would mean that all Bengal might be ruled by a Muslim-majority government. Gandhi, also against Partition on the basis of religion, said he would back it if it gathered wide popular support. But when it did not, Gandhi went along with his Congress colleagues and reluctantly agreed to Partition.

On Partition day, Sarat Bose sat quietly in his garden. After Independence and Partition in August 1947, he resigned from the ruling Congress Party and became a critic of it and a major figure in West Bengal politics. He put forth a stronger socialist program than the ruling party from which he had resigned, and he predicted that the communists would win in China. His positions antagonized Nehru. Never having fully regained his health after his two terms of incarceration, Sarat Bose died at age sixty-one in 1950.

PROPOSING A BENGAL FREE STATE

I. On 12 May 1947 the Associated Press of India released a report . . . that Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose took the initiative in January 1947 in the matter of settling communal differences and bringing about an agreement regarding the formation of a new Cabinet in Bengal and also regarding the future Constitution of Bengal. . . . It was further stated that discussions that had taken place between Mr. Bose and Congress and Muslim League leaders during the last four months . . . were still under consideration.

II. In the course of a Press statement on 20 May 1947 Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose said:

During the last few years I have given considerable thought to the question of the future constitution of India and of the provinces. . . . In January last I took the initiative in the matter of settling communal differences and bringing about an agreement regarding the formation of a new Cabinet in Bengal and also regarding the future Constitution of Bengal and discussed my ideas with Mr. Abul Hashim, Secretary, Bengal Provincial Muslim League . . . On the 26th January last . . . I said . . . “I have always held the view that India must be a Union of autonomous Socialist Republics and I believe that if the different provinces are redistributed on a linguistic basis and what are called provinces are converted into autonomous Socialist Republics, those Socialist Republics will gladly co-operate with one another in forming an Indian Union. It would be an Indian Union of Indian conception and Indian making. . . .”

Events have happened in Bengal and in other parts of the country which have driven large sections of my countrymen to desperation and have led persons prominent in public life, who until recently had unequivocally declared that they were against Pakistan and partition, to lend their support both to Pakistan and to partition. . . . Conceding Pakistan and supporting partition would be suicidal to the cause of Indian independence and also to the cause of social progress. It will make the partitioned provinces happy hunting grounds for imperialists, communalists and reactionaries. It will dissolve the existing linguistic bonds and instead of resolving communal differences will accentuate and aggravate them. Instead of thinking and talking of Pakistan and partition and thereby bringing into existence armed communal camps, we have to devise ways and means as to how to live and work together and how to form people's governments which will look not to communal interests but to common political, social and economic interests of the people. . . . We cannot and must not allow ourselves to be led by the British imperialists or the Indian Communists and reactionaries. . . .

III. The Associated Press of India reported on 22 May 1947 . . . that complete terms had emerged out of the discussions that took place between Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose and certain prominent Congress and Muslim League leaders regarding the future constitution of Bengal and the formation of a new Cabinet. The terms were as follows:

1. Bengal will be a Free State . . . [that] will decide its relations with the rest of India.
2. The Constitution of the Free State of Bengal will provide for election to the Bengal Legislature on the basis of joint electorate and adult franchise, with reservation of seats proportionate to the population amongst the Hindus and Muslims. The seats as between the Hindus and the Scheduled Caste Hindus will be distributed amongst them in proportion to their respective population,

or in such manner as may be agreed among them. The constituencies and the votes will be distributive and not cumulative. A candidate who gets the majority of the votes of his own community cast during the elections and 25 per cent of the votes of the other communities so cast, will be declared elected. If no candidate satisfies these conditions, that candidate who gets the largest number of votes of his own community will be elected.

3. On the announcement by His Majesty's Government that the proposal of the Free State of Bengal has been accepted and that Bengal will not be partitioned, the present Bengal Ministry will be dissolved and a new Interim Ministry brought into being, consisting of an equal number of Muslims and Hindus (including Scheduled Caste Hindus) but excluding the Chief Minister. In this Ministry, the Chief Minister will be a Muslim and the Home Minister a Hindu.

4. Pending the final emergence of a Legislature and a Ministry under the new constitution, the Hindus (including the Scheduled Caste Hindus) and the Muslims will have an equal share in the services, including military and police. The Services will be manned by Bengalees.

5. A Constituent Assembly composed of 30 persons, 16 Muslims and 14 non-Muslims, will be elected by the Muslim and non-Muslim members of the Legislature respectively, excluding the Europeans. . . .

V. A special messenger carrying a sealed cover from Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose to Mahatma Gandhi left on 22 May 1947 for Patna where the latter was then staying. . . . The following letter to Mr. Bose from Mahatma Gandhi . . . is of great interest.

Patna 25/5/47

My dear Sarat,

I have your note. There is nothing in the draft stipulating that nothing will be done by mere majority. Every act of Government must carry with it the co-operation of at least two-thirds of the Hindu members in the Executive and the Legislature. There should be an admission that Bengal has common culture and common mother tongue—Bengali. Make sure that the Central Muslim League approved of the proposal. . . . If your presence is necessary in Delhi I shall telephone or telegraph. I propose to discuss the draft with the Working Committee.

Yours, Bapu

VI. The Associated Press of India released the following report . . . on 26 May 1947:

Some changes are understood to be under discussion in the terms relating to the future constitution of Bengal that have emerged from the talks initiated by Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose with certain League and Congress leaders.

The authors of the terms have been continuing their discussions with a view to improving them and these talks have mostly centred round the provisions relating to (1) the Bengal Free State's relations with the rest of India and (2) elections to the Legislature. . . .

Amended Paragraph 1: Bengal will be a Free State. The Free State of Bengal will decide its relations with the rest of India. The question of joining any Union will be decided by the Legislature of the Free State of Bengal by a two-thirds majority.

Amended Paragraph 2: The Constitution of the Free State of Bengal will provide for election to the Bengal Legislature on the basis of joint electorate and adult franchise, with reservation of seats proportionate to the population amongst Hindus and Muslims. . . .

VII. Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose told the Associated Press of India in New Delhi on 31 May 1947 that he had discussed with Mahatma Gandhi the Bengal situation. . . .

Mr. Bose expressed the belief if the Congress High Command would accept his plan, then it would be easier to persuade the League High Command to agree to Mr. Suhrawardy's scheme of United Bengal which was virtually the same as his own plan.

Mr. Bose said:

I do not say that Bengal should remain outside the Union. What I say is that only a Free Bengal can decide her relations with the rest of India.

VIII. Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose addressed this letter to Mr. M. A. Jinnah on 9 June 1947:

1, Woodburn Park, Calcutta 9th June, 1947

My dear Jinnah,

. . . Bengal is passing through the greatest crisis in her history, but she can yet be saved. She can be saved if you will kindly give the following instructions to Muslim members of the Bengal Legislative Assembly:

(1) At the meeting to be held of all members of the Legislative Assembly (other than Europeans) at which a decision will be taken on the issue as to which Constituent Assembly the province as a whole would join if it were subsequently decided by the two parts to remain united, to vote neither for the Hindusthan Constituent Assembly nor for the Pakistan Constituent Assembly, and to make it clear by a statement in the Assembly or in the press or otherwise, that they are solidly in favour of Bengal having a Constituent Assembly of her own;

(2) At the meetings of the members of the two parts of the Legislative Assembly sitting separately and empowered to vote whether or not the province should be partitioned, to vote solidly against partition.

The request I am making to you is in accordance with the views you expressed to me when we met. But it seems to me that if you merely express your views to your members and [do] not give them specific instructions as to how to vote, the situation cannot be saved. I hope you will do all in your power to enable Bengal to remain united and to make her a free and independent State.

If the Muslim members of the Bengal Legislative Assembly vote solidly as suggested in paragraphs (1) and (2) above, I think Lord Mountbatten will be compelled to convene another meeting of all members of the Assembly (other than Europeans) at which a decision can be taken on the issue as to whether the province . . . desires to have a Constituent Assembly of her own. . . .

Yours sincerely,
Sarat Chandra Bose

. . . Further conversations with him had to be dropped as the Congress High Command turned down Mr. . . . Bose's scheme for a united and independent Bengal . . . Gandhiji said in one of his prayer speeches that he "had been taken to task for supporting Sarat Babu's move."

IX. Mahatma Gandhi wrote the following letter to Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose on 21 June 1947 from Hardwar:

My dear Sarat,
. . . The way to work for unity I have pointed out when the geographical (unity) is broken.

Love, Bapu

ON THE MOUNTBATTEN PLAN

ON THE MOUNTBATTEN PLAN (I), [the agreement on partition by the main parties]

Interview to the Free Press Journal, Bombay, released at New Delhi on June 5, 1947:

H.M.G.'s India Plan has dealt a staggering blow to the cause of Indian unity and independence—a blow from which we may not be able to recover for many years. It is true that the plan has been accepted by the two High Commands, but if we analyse it carefully, we shall find that instead

of accelerating our pace towards the goal of freedom, it makes its attainment more difficult. What has surprised me most is that those who were until recently most vehement in demanding that India should remain one and undivided should have so readily supported division of India and even partition of provinces.

The plan has given no satisfaction to the Sikhs of the Punjab and I feel sure that . . . we shall find that it will give no satisfaction to the people of Bengal also. The demand of the people of the N.W.F.P. both Muslims and Hindus, for the establishment of an independent Pathan State has been ignored and what has been offered them is a choice between Hindusthan and Pakistan.

The tragic happenings in Bengal, Bihar, the Punjab and the Frontier Province are as fresh in my mind as in that of anybody else; nevertheless, I feel that a different and more satisfactory remedy could have been found for the ills that have overtaken our body politic. If the people of Bengal, the Punjab and the Frontier Province had been allowed to find their own remedy themselves without any interference from the top . . . the establishment of free and independent States in Bengal, the Punjab and the N.W.F.P. would have laid the foundations for a real and lasting peace. . . . It would have eventually led to the establishment of the Indian Union of our dreams. . . .

ON THE MOUNTBATTEN PLAN (II)

Extract from a statement to the Press released at Calcutta on June 8, 1947:

British Imperialists have won. "Divide and Rule" has been their policy for the last 150 years and it continues to be their policy, even at the moment when they are supposed to be quitting India. . . . The top-ranking Congress leaders have already begun to talk in the Churchillian strain about "Co-operative Commonwealth." Some of them have envisaged very close relations with Britain. In that background, British Imperialist manoeuvring will go on, but possibly in a more subtle and insidious way. . . . But the dream of independent India, free from British Imperialist control and influence, will more and more become a forgotten dream. . . .

I have no doubt what H. M. G.'s plan would lead to. It is bound to lead to perpetual conflicts between the Hindus and the Muslims in the Hindu majority provinces as well as in the Muslim majority provinces. If peace is what we seek, we cannot get it by accepting H. M. G.'s plan. If independence is what we seek, the Plan sounds its death knell. It is possible even now for Congress and Muslim League leaders to retrace their steps. Will they have the vision and the courage to do so? Let them reform the provinces on [a] linguistic basis and give them independence. Let them intro-

duce in the reformed provinces adult franchise and joint electorate. If they do that, they will be sowing the seeds out of which will grow an independent and united India, an India not of Hindus against Muslims, or Muslims against Hindus, but an India of Hindus and Muslims, an India which will take her rightful place among the nations of the world.

[From Sarat Chandra Bose, *I Warned My Countrymen* (Calcutta: Netaji Research Bureau, 1968), 183–187, 190–197, 199.]

LORD LOUIS MOUNTBATTEN: NEGOTIATIONS FOR INDEPENDENCE AND PARTITION

Lord Louis Mountbatten (1900–1979) was the last viceroy of the British Raj; he presided over the final steps to Partition and the exit of the British from the crown jewel of their empire in 1947. Connected to almost all the royal families of Europe and a descendant of Queen Victoria, Mountbatten was the son of the first lord of the Admiralty; he came from a family that had changed its name from Battenburg to Mountbatten in a time of anti-German hostility. Handsome, charming, quick-witted, and intelligent, Louis Mountbatten pursued a military career, rose rapidly in the naval ranks, and married Edwina Ashley, a wealthy and attractive heiress, who accompanied him to India.

During World War II he became supreme commander of the Allied forces in mainland Southeast Asia. Since he was often in India, he came to know a great deal about the problems of the subcontinent. He and Jawaharlal Nehru became friends, which facilitated his final work in India.

In January 1947 Prime Minister Attlee announced that Lord Mountbatten would become the last viceroy and the transfer would take place no later than August 1948. Mountbatten reached India in March, and conferred with political leaders. A rapid and decisive decision-maker, Mountbatten concluded within weeks that a partition would have to accompany the transfer of power. Although he did not like this conclusion, his talks with Jinnah convinced him that an undivided and free India was not possible. In the historical record that he left, Mountbatten placed the blame for the division of India on Jinnah.

As a British nationalist and pro-Commonwealth man, Mountbatten thought that an undivided India would be easier to defend, better for Britain and the Commonwealth, and better for the economic future of South Asia. But he too, like his predecessor Wavell, proved unable to devise a satisfactory agreement on the sharing of power between the Congress and the Muslim League.

Once he saw that partition and independence would go together and that violence was increasing, he determined that the British should leave sooner rather than later. He also wanted to avoid what he called “the balkanization of India,” meaning that he preferred two independent, successor states to three, five, or five hundred. There was

to be no independent Bengal and no independent states formed by the former princely states. He did all in his power, and used his royal ties and charm and muscle, to achieve the outcome he thought best.

Jinnah and the Muslim Leaguers felt that he was too friendly to the Congress, but they could do nothing to limit his moves in carrying out his plans. The Leaguers—and later, many Pakistanis—felt that he influenced Lord Radcliffe's border recommendations in favor of India, allowing India to finally claim most of Jammu and Kashmir when it should have gone to Pakistan. Mountbatten, for his part, maintained that he had been evenhanded and had wanted to be governor-general or crown representative to both successor states after August 15, 1947. He did become the governor-general of India, but Jinnah denied him this role vis-à-vis Pakistan.

In 1948 Mountbatten returned to Great Britain and to his military career. He was one of the most beloved members of the royal family, and thus became a target for IRA assassins, who killed him in 1979. He was greatly mourned in Britain and also in India, but not in Pakistan.

DIFFICULTIES WITH JINNAH AND THE IMPERCEPTIBLE NOD

These selections from his interviews with Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, whom he helped to write *Freedom at Midnight*, give a sense of his personality and of the dilemmas he faced.

Q. Would you say you were pre-disposed in any way, before you reached India?

A. It's very difficult to say for certain what the state of my mind was on arrival. I was a great believer in a unified India. I thought the greatest single legacy we could leave the Indians was a unified country. . . . I realized I still had to unify the [princely] states with the rest of India. That, I thought was going to be the greatest difficulty and indeed it was an absolute miracle that we managed to get that straightened out. I thought we should try everything we could to keep India united and I really was very keen that we should find a solution.

Q. What did the Hindu leaders think of partition?

A. Nehru was horrified by the idea of partition. He was an extraordinarily intelligent man. He saw the point on everything. . . . I was completely in step with him. He would have given me any help he could to try and keep India unified if Jinnah had shown any sort of advance at all. . . .

Gandhi had no key at all. *The key to the whole thing obviously was Jinnah. Not only that, but I believe there was confusion all the way through. Most people thought it was Gandhi. If they didn't think it was Gandhi they thought it was Nehru. But it wasn't Gandhi, it wasn't Nehru, it was Jinnah and Patel. They were the two people.*

If Mr. Jinnah had died of this illness about two years earlier, I think we would have kept the country unified. He was the one man who really made it

impossible. I didn't realize how impossible it was going to be until I actually met Jinnah.

I have the most enormous conceit in my ability to persuade people to do the right and intelligent thing, not because I am persuasive, so much, as because I have the knack of being able to present the facts in their most favourable light. I didn't realize there was nothing at all you could do about Jinnah. He had completely made up his mind. . . .

Q. There was an impasse?

A. All I could do was just to negotiate. For instance, he wanted to have the whole of the Punjab, the whole of Bengal, and I told him this was not on. And then of course there followed that amusing and rather tragic game of around and around the mulberry bush which I shall describe.

When I told Jinnah I don't want you to have a partitioned India, I gave him all my reasons, and he said, "Well, I am afraid we must. We can't trust them. Look what they did to us in 1938–39. When you go, we'll permanently be at the mercy of the elected Hindu majority and we shall have no place, we shall be oppressed and it will be quite terrible."

I told him I was quite certain that people like Nehru, and there were many of his colleagues like him, had no intention whatever of oppressing them.

He said, "Well, that's what you say, but Nehru was still the most important figure when they did, in fact, oppress us in 1938–39. And he failed to stop it. But," he said, "you must give me a viable Pakistan. You must give me the whole of the Punjab as well as Sind and NWFP and Bengal and Assam, and I shall want a corridor to unite them."

I said, "Look, Mr. Jinnah, you have said that you won't agree to having a minority population ruled by a majority population."

"Absolutely."

"Alright. I happen to know that in the Punjab and Bengal there are wide areas where the opposite community is in the majority. It happens also that they just about divide east and west. So I'm afraid that if you want Pakistan, I shall have to arrange for the partitioning of both the Punjab and Bengal. You cannot take into Pakistan the Hindus of Punjab and Bengal."

"Your Excellency doesn't understand that the Punjab is a nation. Bengal is a nation. A man is a Punjabi or a Bengali first before he is a Hindu or a Muslim. If you give us those provinces you must, under no condition, partition them. You will destroy their viability and cause endless bloodshed and trouble."

"Mr. Jinnah, I entirely agree."

"Oh, you do."

"Yes, of course. A man is not only a Punjabi or a Bengali before he is a Muslim or Hindu, but he is an Indian before all else. What you're saying is the perfect, absolute answer I've been looking for. You've presented me the arguments to keep India united."

"Oh, you don't understand. If you do that . . ." and so we'd start all over again.

"Look, Mr. Jinnah, it is a fact you want partition?"

"Yes, of course."

"Well, if you want partition then you must have partition of Punjab and Bengal."

You know . . . this . . . went over several discussions. He simply was caught in his own trap. He finally gave up and said, "So you insist on giving me a moth-eaten Pakistan."

I said, "You call it a moth-eaten Pakistan. I don't even want you to take it at all if it's as moth-eaten as that. I'd really like you to leave India unified."

But he was absolutely set on his great cry of no. . . . I realized the man was quite unshakeably immovable and quite impervious to any quarrel or logical argument and not even prepared to look at any safeguards which I might be able to devise. I told him, "Mr. Jinnah, if only you would believe me, if only you would accept some organization like the Cabinet Mission Plan you would find that you could have great autonomy, the Punjab and Bengal could rule themselves. . . . It would be quite independent. What is more, you could have the great pleasure of oppressing the minorities in any way you wanted to, because you'd be able to prevent the centre from interfering. Doesn't that appeal to you?"

"No . . . *I'd sooner lose everything than be under a Hindu raj.*"

He went on and on. . . . I had never visualized that an intelligent man, well-educated, trained in England, was capable of closing his mind—it wasn't that he didn't see it—he closed his mind. . . .

Mind you, Jinnah is now forgotten. He was the man who did it. Bangladesh and all that misery which I forecast. Twenty-five years ago Rajagopalachari and I said it would last 25 years. . . . It couldn't go on. All this misery and trouble was caused by Jinnah and no one else. . . . He was the evil genius in this whole thing. . . . You couldn't move him. . . .

The only difference between the scheme I was prepared to give Jinnah and that which he would have got under the Cabinet Mission Plan was that under the Cabinet Mission Plan he was obliged to accept a small, weak centre at Delhi controlling the defence, communications and external affairs. The three might really be lumped together under the general heading of defence.

That speech was absolutely the last plea for a united India. . . . I then realized that he had this faculty of closing his mind to the thing—he could see points, he was an able debater, he had a well-trained mind, he was a lawyer, but *he gave me the impression of having closed his mind, closed his ears; he didn't want to be persuaded.* . . . In the case of partitioning Punjab and Bengal, he didn't even seem to have been listening . . . at all. . . .

I can remember when Jinnah had got his Pakistan. When the British Government was prepared to let me put forward the plan of June 3, when even the Sikhs had swallowed it, and Congress. This is what he'd been playing for, and he'd got it. And he said, "No."

Actually what he said was, "I shall have to put it to the Muslim League Council."

I said, "I can give you until midnight. Or 8 a.m."

He said, "I can't get them here before a week."

I said, "Mr. Jinnah, if you think that I can hold the position for a week you must be crazy. You know this has been drawn up to the boiling point. A miracle has been achieved in that the Congress Party, for the first time, is prepared to accept this sacrifice of partition. But they are not going to be shown up. Having to wait for you to get your Muslim League to accept it tonight or tomorrow morning, it's out for good. . . ."

And we went on and on. And he said, "No, no, I must do this thing the logical, legal way, as is properly constituted. I am not the Muslim League."

I said, "Now, now Mr. Jinnah, come on . . . please don't try and kid yourself that I don't know who's who and what's what in the Muslim League."

And then he said, "I must do this thing absolutely legally."

I said, "I'm going to tell you something. I can't allow you to throw away the solution you worked so hard to get. It's absolutely idiotic to refuse to say yes. The Congress has said yes. The Sikhs have said yes. Tomorrow at the meeting, I shall say I have received assurance from the Congress Party, with a few reservations, that I am sure I can satisfy and they have accepted. The Sikhs have accepted. And I had a very long, very friendly conversation with Mr. Jinnah last night, we went through every point and Mr. Jinnah feels this is an absolutely acceptable solution. Now, at this moment, I will turn to you and you will nod your head in agreement. . . . If you shake your head (to indicate disagreement) you will have lost the thing for good, and . . . you can go to hell."

I didn't know whether he was going to shake his head or nod his head the next morning.

I said, "Finally, Mr. Jinnah has given me his personal assurance that he is in agreement with this plan," and I turned to him and he went like that. (Mountbatten nodded his head imperceptibly, as Jinnah had done.)

Now I can tell you that if he had shaken his head, the whole thing would have been in the bumble pot. *To think that I had to say yes for this clot to get his own plan through, it shows you what one was up against. This was probably the most hair-raising moment of my entire life. I've never forgotten that moment, waiting to see if that clot was going to nod or shake his head.* He had no expression on his face. He couldn't have made a smaller gesture and still accepted.

The funny part is that the others, I knew, guessed that Jinnah was being difficult. . . . He was the Muslim League and what he said, they did. He knew he'd got the last dreg. . . .

Q. Was there a sense of relief among the others?

A. I, in fact, realized that none of them had the faintest conception of the administrative consequences of the decision they were taking. I'd given Ismay the special task with a high priority to work out all that had to be done. God

knows, 30, 40, 50 major things. He produced this admirable paper on the administrative consequences of partition and transfer of power. . . . This was really stage managed. The result was that their whole attention was distracted by this. . . . Then I did a thing that was very unpopular. . . . I had a calendar made, which showed how many days were left to the transfer of power.

They disliked it because they thought it was a trick of mine. I knew it was unpopular but I couldn't care less. It was unpopular because they felt they were being put under pressure and they were. . . . If I'd let up on them the whole thing would have blown up under my feet.

I have no worry about Jinnah being shown up for the bastard he was. You know he really was. I actually got on with him, because I can get on with anybody. . . . The worst thing he did to me was that he kept on saying I mustn't go, that I must stay, that if I didn't stay they wouldn't get their assets transferred so that after the transfer of power I must stay out in over-all charge. When this was analysed by my staff and myself, we realized that we couldn't have two governors-general with a viceroy over them after independence. Quite clearly the only way we could do the thing was if I were Governor-General of both provinces just for the transfer, and that was accepted tacitly. . . . My staff talked about it with his staff. And indeed we know that this came about because of the Indian side which first suggested that I should stay with them—and when they suggested that, which staggered me, that they were prepared to do it, then I said that I thought the solution would be if Jinnah wanted me to stay, then I must also stay as Governor-General of Pakistan.

It would have been absolute hell, living in two houses, it would be almost untenable, but I was prepared to try it. But he led us up the garden path. At the last moment this man—who obviously wanted to run Pakistan—instead of running it as the chief executive, i.e. the prime minister, decided to be the constitutional head of state who had no authority whatsoever. . . .

[From Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, eds., *Mountbatten and the Partition of India, March 22–August 15, 1947* (Delhi: Vikas, 1983), 61–69.]

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: THE FUTURE PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA REFLECTS

Background on Jawaharlal Nehru is given in chapter 6.

“A TIME OF TRIAL AND SORROW”

In this statement of June 3, 1947, when the final decision had been made for Partition, Nehru insisted that he had never wanted it, but that the leaders of India—including himself, other Congress leaders, and Jinnah—had recommended the decision as the best for the country. As someone who believed that religion should be a secondary factor in forming national identity, he had been surprised by the strength of the Pakistan movement among India's Muslims, but after the riots and the deadlocks in the Interim Government, he agreed to Partition. But he also maintained that the people,

i.e., their representatives in the Bengal and Punjab Legislative Assemblies, would have the ultimate word. They would vote for either separation or unity. He well knew, however, that the Muslim Leaguers in these assemblies would follow their leader and vote for secession of the Muslim-majority areas of these two provinces, which is what Jinnah had agreed to in the days up to June 3. Nehru looked ahead to days of difficulty, and, hopefully, to the development of a better India. He called for calm and non-violence, but could not control the passions and hatreds that had been released.

Nine months have passed, months of sore trial and difficulty, of anxiety and sometimes even of heartbreak. Yet looking back at this period with its suffering and sorrow for our people there is much on the credit side also, for India has advanced nationally and internationally and is respected today in the councils of the world. In the domestic sphere something substantial has been achieved though the burden on the common man still continues to be terribly heavy and millions lack food and cloth and other necessities of life. Many vast schemes of development are nearly ready and yet it is true that most of our dreams about the brave things we were going to accomplish have still to be realized.

You know well the difficulties which the country has had to face, economic, political and communal. These months have been full of tragedy for millions and the burden on those who had the governance of the country in their hands has been great indeed.

My mind is heavy with the thought of the sufferings of our people in the areas of disturbance, the thousands who are dead and those, especially our women-folk, who have suffered agony worse than death. To their families and to innumerable people who have been uprooted from their homes and rendered destitute I offer my deep sympathy and assurance that we shall do all in our power to bring relief. We must see to it that such tragedies do not happen again. . . .

You have just heard an announcement on behalf of the British Government. This announcement lays down a procedure for self-determination in certain areas of India. It envisages on the one hand the possibility of these areas seceding from India, on the other it promises a big advance towards complete independence. Such a big change must have the full concurrence of the people before effect can be given to it, for it must always be remembered that the future of India can only be decided by the people of India and not by any outside authority. . . . These proposals will be placed soon before representative assemblies of the people for consideration. . . . So while we must necessarily abide by what the people finally decide, we had to come to certain decisions ourselves and to recommend them to the people. . . .

It is with no joy in my heart that I commend these proposals to you though I have no doubt in my mind that this is the right course. For generations we have dreamt and struggled for a free and independent united India. The proposal to allow certain parts to secede if they so will is painful for any of us to contemplate. Nevertheless I am convinced that our present decision is the right one even from the larger viewpoint. The united India that we have laboured for was

not one of compulsion and coercion but a free and willing association of a free people. It may be that in this way we shall reach that united India sooner than otherwise and that she will have a stronger and more secure foundation.

We are little men serving great causes, but because the cause is great something of that greatness falls upon us also. Mighty forces are at work in the world today and in India, and I have no doubt that we are ushering in a period of greatness for India. The India of geography, of history and tradition, the India of our minds and hearts cannot change. . . . Let us face the future not with easy optimism or with any complacency or weakness but with confidence and a firm faith in India.

There has been violence, shameful, degrading and revolting violence, in various parts of the country. This must end. We are determined to end it. We must make it clear that political ends are not to be achieved by methods of violence, now or in the future.

On this the eve of great changes in India we have to make a fresh start with clear vision and a firm mind, with steadfastness and tolerance and a stout heart. We should not wish ill to anyone but think always of every Indian as our brother and comrade. The good of the four hundred millions of India must be our supreme objective.

[From Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Anthology*, ed. Sarvepalli Gopal
(Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1980), 72–74.]

MOHANDAS GANDHI ON PARTITION

Although Gandhi was consulted throughout the negotiations over the transfer of power and the prospective division of the country, he also acted as if the process was going on without him. He considered, as he said, all Indians, regardless of religion, as his “brothers,” and so could not understand why the Muslims, wherever they lived, wanted to separate from other Indians. He well knew that even if there was to be some transfer of population, there were sufficient numbers of Muslims in India that many would remain and never go to Pakistan. So Partition would not bring the separation that Jinnah seemed to want. Hindus and many Muslims would have to live together in India, and so he spoke with great sorrow and intelligence about questions of language, identity, non-violence, etc., as he tried to come to terms with what, against his better judgment, was happening as India was divided.

SPEECHES AT FOUR PRAYER MEETINGS IN JUNE–JULY, 1947

NEW DELHI, JUNE 4, 1947

Brothers and Sisters,

. . . I told you that we would not give even an inch of land as Pakistan under coercion. In other words, we would not accept Pakistan under the threat of vio-

lence. Only if they can convince us by peaceful argument and if their proposal appeals to our reason would we concede Pakistan.

I cannot say that this whole question has been treated rationally. The Congress Working Committee insists that they have not granted anything under duress. They are not scared because so many people are dying and property is being destroyed. . . . They have taken this course because they realized that it was not possible to get round the Muslim League in any other way. . . .

We do not wish to force anyone. We tried hard. We tried to reason with them, but they refused to come into the Constituent Assembly. The League supporters kept on arguing that they were afraid of the Hindu majority in the event of their joining the Constituent Assembly. . . . Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs all can say that the Muslims have committed a great blunder. But on what ground can we absolve ourselves of the blame? Let us leave it to God to pass judgment.

I would say this much, that it was wrong on their part to demand Pakistan. But they can think of nothing else. They say that they can never live where the Hindus have a majority. They are harming themselves by making this demand. . . . When my own brother, whether he follows my religion or some other religion, wants to harm me I cannot aid him, even though he may not be aware that he is harming me. If I do it I am sure to be crushed between the two stones of a quern. Why should I not keep my own millstone apart? . . .

The Viceroy has had no hand in this decision. The decision has been taken jointly by all the leaders in consultation. . . . The Cabinet Mission also gave a reasonable award. But the League went back on its assurance and now this course has had to be adopted. They [the Muslims] have got to come back to India. Even if Pakistan is formed, there will have to be mutual exchange of populations and movements to and fro. Let us hope that co-operation endures. . . .

For the Hindus, the Sikhs, all say that they would live in their own homelands, not in the Muslims'. The Hindus are willing to be under Sikh rule because they say the Sikhs never compel them at the point of the sword to bow before the *Granth Saheb*. . . .

The Viceroy has already stated in his speech and he has also assured me that when we approach him united this decision would be revoked. . . . The Viceroy says that his task is merely to see that the British carry on their task honestly till power is transferred and then quit in peace. The British people do not wish that chaos should reign after they quit this country.

I had already said that they should not worry about anarchy. I am, after all, a gambler. But who would listen to me? You do not listen to me. The Muslims have given me up. Nor can I fully convince the Congress of my point of view. Actually I am a slave of the Congress, because I belong to India. I tried my best to bring the Congress round to accept the proposal of May 16. But now we must accept what is an accomplished fact. . . .

But I would like to request Jinnah Saheb, implore him, to have direct talks with us at least now. Whatever has happened is all right, but now let us sit together and decide about the future.

[From CWMG, 88:73–76.]

NEW DELHI, JUNE 9, 1947

Brothers and sisters,

When I said that the country should not be divided I was confident that I had the support of the masses. But when the popular view is contrary to mine, should I force my own view on the people? I have repeatedly said that we should never compromise with falsehood and wickedness. . . . I must admit that today the general opinion is not with me . . . so I must step aside. . . .

Another friend writes that this Viceroy is even more dangerous than the other Viceroys. . . . I can never agree with this opinion. . . . Why can he not understand the simple thing that the general opinion, that is, the opinion of those who are fit to hold any opinion, is supporting the Congress leaders? The leaders are not fools. They too find the partition repugnant, but as representatives of the country they cannot go against public opinion. They derive their power from the people. The situation would have been different if the correspondent had the power. And under no circumstances would it be proper to criticize the Viceroy when the leaders are elected representatives of the people or when our own people betray the country. The saying “as the king so the subjects” is not so apt as its reverse: “As the subjects so the king.”

[From CWMG, 88:118.]

NEW DELHI, JUNE 12, 1947

Brothers and sisters,

You see Khwaja Saheb³³ sitting to my right. . . . He did not want the country to be divided. Nevertheless it has happened and he has come to me to lament it. . . .

Well, the League wanted it, but the Congress did not like it. How long can a thing over which the two are not agreed last? Geographically we may have been divided. But so long as hearts too have not been divided, we must not weep. For all will be well so long as our hearts remain whole. The country may well be divided today into Pakistan and Hindustan. In the end we have to become one. Not that they will come and join us through vexation. Our behaviour will be such that even if they want to they will not be able to keep themselves away from us.

It irks Jawaharlal that the rest of the country should be called Hindustan. When one part is now Pakistan, how can the other part be Hindustan, he asks.

He is right. For it will mean that it belongs to the Hindus. What then would the Christians, the Jews and the Muslims left here do? Must they leave? Must Pantji ask Khwaja Saheb, who belongs to U. P. and is a friend of his, to leave U. P.? If this happens, Mr. Jinnah will have been proved right in his assertion that the hearts were already divided.

It would mean that if my son becomes a Muslim he becomes a national of another country. If we segregate three-quarters of our fellow countrymen and keep them away from the governance of the country, our Hindustan will be just as Mr. Jinnah has pictured it.

Then there will be a Parsistan, a Sikhistan, separate bits for the untouchables, the Adivasis and so forth and Hindustan will no longer remain Hindustan. It will undergo Balkanization. . . .

Jawaharlal has suggested Union of Indian Republic as the name for the country. That is, all will live together here. If a part wants to secede we shall not force it to remain, but those that remain shall live as brothers. We shall so treat them that they will not want to break away, they will not feel that they are separate. . . .

Today someone asked me why we should still continue with Hindustani. Such a question should not be raised. If we adopt the attitude that since Urdu will be the language of Pakistan we should have Hindi as our language then the charge of separatism against us also will be proved. Hindustani means an easy language to speak, read and write. It used to be one language at one time but lately we have Urdu loaded with Persian expressions which the people cannot understand and Hindi crammed with Sanskrit words which also people cannot understand. If we used that language we should have to eject from our midst people like Sapru.³⁴ Although a Hindu, his mother tongue is Urdu. If I start talking to him in Sanskritized Hindi he will not be able to make head or tail of it. We should therefore continue the work of Hindustani—of the Hindustani Sabha³⁵—and prove our love for those whose language is Urdu.

I see God's will in what has happened. He wants to test us both to see what Pakistan will do and how generous India can be. We must pass the test. I am hoping that no Hindu will be so mad as to show inadequate respect for things the Muslims consider sacred or fail to accord the same status to the Aligarh University as he does to Malaviyaji's [Banaras] Hindu University. If we destroy their sacred places we shall ourselves be destroyed.

Similarly we should protect the fire temples of Parsis and the synagogues of Jews. . . . We have to answer lies with truth and meanness with generosity. Always and in every situation our eyes, ears and hands should remain pure. Only then can we save ourselves; only then can the world survive. I have not the least doubt of it. We must not run away with the idea that now that we have given the Muslims what they wanted we can do what we like.

[From CWMG, 88:138–141.]

NEW DELHI, JULY 13, 1947

Brothers and sisters,

. . . There has been a Press conference addressed by Mr. Jinnah. . . . He holds out the assurance that the minorities in Pakistan will not be put to any hardship. They shall be accorded the same treatment as Muslims. The Hindus will be free to visit their temples and the Sikhs their Gurudwaras. Of course, I cannot take anyone's word at face value. Even today in Pakistan carnage and arson are rampant. This is happening in the Indian Union too. Who is doing this? Is it only the Muslims or are Hindus too responsible for it? I am flooded with letters of all kinds. People ask why they cannot live in peace. I ask Mr. Jinnah when his assurance will be put into practice. Will it be effective only after August 15? Sind will be a part of Pakistan. The Muslim League has the most influence there. Mr. Jinnah has become the Governor-General. . . . We are in some way still connected with him through the Governor-General and the Governor-General still remains responsible to the king. Mr. Jinnah also remains the President of the League. This further strengthens his status. He should act with justice. Why should Sindhis be running away from Sind? If even a single Sindhi leaves Sind it will be a matter of shame to Mr. Jinnah. . . .

I do not know what has happened . . . in U. P. But the Muslims of U. P. are walking in fear. They do not know whether they can continue to live there or not. But why can't they live there, I ask? I ask U. P. and Bihar as I ask Mr. Jinnah: Can Muslims live in those provinces or not? . . . If I can say anything on behalf of Muslims or the Indian Union, it is only this, that everyone should have justice. If this is ensured then there will be nothing more left to say and the pain of partition will have been forgotten. . . .

Even if we have not learnt the lesson of ahimsa, we should at least from our thirty years of experience learn the lesson that we shall never again become slaves irrespective of whether we achieve this through violence or non-violence. I do not say that it should be only through non-violence. I have been saying this since I was in Bihar. People ask for guns and swords. I say, why do you want these weapons? Proclaim that you will never bow down. I said the same in Noakhali. If we can show that we have learnt this lesson after thirty years of experience, it will not matter whether people are violent or non-violent. If they . . . ask me, I shall still say that they must follow only non-violence. If a single individual has to defy the world he can do so only through non-violence. Where there is non-violence there is God. The sword breaks before it.

[From CWMG, 88:329–331.]

ABUL KALAM AZAD: MUSLIM NATIONALIST

There were many Muslims who rejected the two-nation theory of Jinnah and the Muslim League. They were convinced that the best hope for the future of the Muslim population of the subcontinent was in a united India, and they supported the In-

dian National Congress. Among them was Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888–1958), a distinguished scholar and writer who was president of the Congress during the difficult period from 1940 to 1946. Born in Mecca of an Indian father and an Arabian mother, he received a traditional Islamic education in Calcutta, but he was persuaded by the writings of Sayyid Ahmad Khan to study the historical and philosophical heritage of Europe through the medium of English. “The ideas I had acquired from my family and early training could no longer satisfy me,” he wrote. “I felt that I must find the truth for myself. Almost instinctively I began to move out of my family orbit and seek my own path.” He adopted the pen name of Azad (“free”) to indicate this change in outlook, and joined an all-Hindu revolutionary group (partly through the influence of Aurobindo Ghose). In 1912 he founded the Urdu journal *al-Hilāl* (“the crescent moon,” an Islamic symbol). Like Mohamed Ali, he was kept in detention during World War I and later joined the pro-caliphate non-cooperation movement under Gandhi’s leadership. Unlike Mohamed Ali, Jinnah, and others, however, he remained within the Congress, believing that Muslims and Hindus could share citizenship in an independent India without compromising their religious beliefs. He became the Union of India’s minister of education from its birth until his death. His great work of scholarship was his commentary on the *Quran* in Urdu, in which he stressed God’s benevolent guidance of mankind.

THE MUSLIMS OF INDIA AND THE FUTURE OF INDIA

The following selection is taken from the speech Maulana Azad gave as Congress president in 1940. He said that when India adopted a new constitution, the rights of the minorities would be guaranteed; furthermore, the minorities, not the majority, would decide what safeguards were necessary.

We have considered the problem of the minorities of India. But are the Muslims such a minority as to have the least doubt or fear about their future? A small minority may legitimately have fears and apprehensions, but can the Muslims allow themselves to be disturbed by them? . . . Nothing is further removed from the truth than to say that Indian Muslims occupy the position of a political minority. It is equally absurd for them to be apprehensive about their rights and interests in a democratic India. . . .

During the last sixty years, this artificial and untrue picture of India was made. . . . This was the result of the same policy of divide and rule which took particular shape in the minds of British Officialdom in India after the Congress launched the national movement. The object of this was to prepare the Musalmans for use against the new political awakening. In this plan, prominence was given to two points. First, that India was inhabited by two different communities, the Hindus and the Musalmans, and for this reason no demand could be made in the name of a united nation. Second: that numerically the Musalmans were far less than the Hindus, and because of this, the . . . consequence of the establishment

of democratic institutions in India would be to establish the rule of the Hindu majority and to jeopardise the existence of the Muslims. Thus were sown the seeds of disunity by British Imperialism on Indian soil. The plant grew and was nurtured and spread its nettles. . . .

Politically speaking, the word minority does not mean just a group that is so small in number and so lacking in other qualities that give strength, that it has no confidence in its own capacity to protect itself from the much larger group that surrounds it. It is not enough that the group should be relatively the smaller, but that it should be absolutely so small as to be incapable of protecting its interests. Thus this is not merely a question of numbers; other factors count also. . . . Let us apply it to the position of the Muslims in India. . . . They stand erect, and to imagine that they exist helplessly as a "minority" is to delude oneself.

The Muslims in India number between eighty and ninety millions. The same type of social or racial divisions, which affect other communities, do not divide them. The powerful bonds of Islamic brotherhood and equality have protected them to a large extent from the weakness that flows from social divisions. It is true that they number only one-fourth of the total population; but the question is not one of population ratio, but of the large numbers and the strength behind them. Can such a vast mass of humanity have any legitimate reason for apprehension that in a free and democratic India, it might be unable to protect its rights and interest?

These numbers are not confined to any particular area but spread out unevenly over different parts of the country. . . . The position of the Muslims is not that of a minority only. If they are in a minority in seven provinces, they are in a majority in five. This being so, there is absolutely no reason why they should be oppressed by the feeling of being a minority.

Whatever may be the details of the future constitution of India, we know that it will be an all-India federation which is, in the fullest sense, democratic, and every unit of which will have autonomy in regard to internal affairs. The federal centre will be concerned only with all-India matters of common concern, such as foreign relations, defence, customs, etc. Under these circumstances, can any one who has any conception of the actual working of a democratic constitution, allow himself to be led astray by this false issue of majority and minority? . . .

I am a Musalman and am proud of that. . . . Islam's splendid traditions of thirteen hundred years are my inheritance. I am unwilling to lose . . . the smallest part of [it]. The teaching and history of Islam, its arts and letters and civilisation are . . . my fortune. It is my duty to protect them.

As a Musalman I have a special interest in Islamic religion and culture and I cannot tolerate any interference with them. But in addition to these sentiments, I have others also which the realities and conditions of my life have forced upon me. The spirit of Islam does not come in the way of these sentiments; it guides and helps me forward. I am proud of being an Indian. . . .

It was India's historic destiny that many human races and cultures and religions should flow to her, finding a home in her hospitable soil, and that many a caravan should find rest here. . . . One of the last of these caravans . . . was that of the followers of Islam. This came here and settled here for good. This led to a meeting of the culture-currents of two different races. Like the Ganga and Jumna, they flowed for a while through separate courses, but nature's immutable law brought them together and joined them in a sangam [union]. This fusion was a notable event in history. . . . We gave her, what she needed most, the most precious of gifts from Islam's treasury, the message of democracy and human equality. . . .

Eleven hundred years of common history have enriched India with our common achievement. Our languages, our poetry . . . our culture, our art, our dress, our manners and customs . . . the . . . happenings of our daily life, everything bears the stamp of our joint endeavour. . . . Our languages were different, but we grew to use a common language; our manners and customs were dissimilar, but they acted and reacted on each other and . . . produced a new synthesis. . . .

This thousand years of our joint life has moulded us into a common nationality. This cannot be done artificially. Nature does her fashioning through her hidden processes in the course of centuries. The cast has now been moulded and destiny has set her seal upon it. Whether we like it or not, we have now become an Indian nation, united and indivisible.

[From Sankar Ghose, ed., *Congress Presidential Speeches* (Calcutta: West Bengal Pradesh Committee, 1972), 356–363.]

THE STEPS TO PARTITION

In his last years, Azad, with the help of writer and educationist Humayun Kabir, and possibly others as well, wrote an account of the Indian freedom struggle entitled *India Wins Freedom*. The first published edition omitted some crucial passages from Azad's original manuscript, in which Azad's version of Partition history differs from that of some of his closest colleagues, including Jawaharlal Nehru. A second, more complete edition restores those passages. Below, passages that were originally omitted in the first edition and that have been added in the second are rendered in italics. There were objections to Azad's account, including allegations that he exaggerated his role and often did not tell the truth. The fullest critique is by Rajmohan Gandhi, *India Wins Errors* (1989).

On 15 March 1946, Mr. Attlee made a statement in the House of Commons on the Indian situation. This statement had no precedents in the history of Indo-British relations. He frankly admitted that the situation had completely changed and demanded a new approach. . . . He went on to say that he did not wish to stress on the differences between the Indians, for . . . Indians were united in

their desire for freedom. This was the underlying demand of all the Indian people, whether they were Hindus or Muslims, Sikhs or Marathas, politicians or civil servants. Mr. Attlee frankly admitted that the conception of nationalism had continually grown stronger. . . . He concluded by announcing that the Cabinet Mission was going out in a positive mood. . . .

The Cabinet Mission arrived in India on 23 March. . . . I came to the conclusion that the Constitution of India must from the nature of the case be federal. Further, it must be so framed as to ensure complete autonomy to the provinces in as many subjects as possible. We had to reconcile the claims of provincial autonomy with national unity. . . .

It was clear to me that defence, communications and foreign affairs were subjects which could be dealt adequately only on an all India basis. Any attempt to deal with them on a provincial level would defeat the purpose and destroy the very basis of a federal Government. Certain other subjects would be equally obviously a provincial responsibility but there would be a third list of subjects where the provincial legislature would decide whether to retain them as provincial subjects or delegate them to the Centre. . . .

If a Constitution was framed which embodied this principle, it would ensure that in the Muslim majority provinces, all subjects except three could be administered by the province itself. This would eliminate from the mind of the Muslims all fears of domination by the Hindus. Once such fears were allayed, it was likely that the provinces would find it an advantage to delegate some other subjects as well to the Central Government. I was also satisfied that even apart from communal considerations, this was the best political solution for a country like India. . . . The Working Committee had given me full powers to negotiate with the Cabinet Mission. . . . I met the members of the Cabinet Mission for the first time on 6 April 1946. . . . I indicated the solution I had already framed. As soon as I said that the Centre should have a minimum list of compulsory subjects and an additional list of optional ones, Lord Pethick-Lawrence said, "You are in fact suggesting a new solution of the communal problem."

Sir Stafford Cripps . . . seemed to be satisfied with my approach.

The . . . Working Committee was convinced about the soundness of the proposal and Gandhiji expressed his complete agreement with the solution. . . .

The Muslim League had for the first time spoken of a possible division of India in its Lahore Resolution. This later on came to be known as the Pakistan Resolution. The solution I suggested was intended to meet the fears of the Muslim League. . . . I felt that the time had come to place it [my scheme] before the country. Accordingly on 15 April 1946, I issued a statement. . . .

I have considered from every possible point of view the scheme of Pakistan as formulated by the Muslim League . . . I have come to the conclusion that it is harmful not only for India as a whole but for Muslims in particular. And in fact it creates more problems than it solves. I must

confess that the very term Pakistan goes against my grain. It suggests that some portions of the world are pure while others are impure. Such a division of territories into pure and impure is un-Islamic and is more in keeping with orthodox Brahmanism which divides men and countries into holy and unholy—a division which is a repudiation of the very spirit of Islam. . . . The prophet says, “God has made the whole world a mosque for me.”

Further, it seems that the scheme of Pakistan is a symbol of defeatism and has been built up on the analogy of the Jewish demand for a national home. It is a confession that Indian Muslims cannot hold their own in India as a whole and would be content to withdraw to a corner. . . .

One can sympathise with the aspiration of the Jews for such a national home, as they are scattered all over the world. . . . The condition of Indian Muslims is quite otherwise. Over 90 million in number, they are in quantity and quality a sufficiently important element in Indian life to influence decisively all questions of administration and policy. . . .

In such a context, the demand for Pakistan loses all force. As a Muslim, I for one am not prepared for a moment to give up my right to treat the whole of India as my domain and to share in the shaping of its political and economic life. . . .

As is well known, Mr. Jinnah’s Pakistan scheme is based on his two nation theory. His thesis is that India contains many nationalities based on religious differences. Of them the two major nations, the Hindus and Muslims, must as separate nations have separate states. When Dr. Edward Thompson once pointed out to Mr. Jinnah that Hindus and Muslims live side by side in thousands of Indian towns, villages and hamlets, Mr. Jinnah replied that this in no way affected their separate nationality. Two nations according to Mr. Jinnah confront one another in every hamlet, village and town, and he, therefore, desires that they should be separated into two states. . . .

If it can be shown that the scheme of Pakistan can in any way benefit Muslims I would be prepared to accept it myself and also to work for its acceptance by others. . . . I am forced to the conclusion that it can in no way benefit them or allay their legitimate fears.

Let us consider dispassionately the consequences which will follow if we give effect to the Pakistan scheme. India will be divided into two States, one with a majority of Muslims and the other of Hindus. In the Hindustan State there will remain three and a half crores of Muslims scattered in small minorities all over the land. With 17 per cent in U.P., 12 per cent in Bihar and 9 per cent in Madras, they will be weaker than they are today in the Hindu majority provinces. They have had their homelands in these regions for almost a thousand years and built up well-known centres of Muslim culture and civilisation there.

They will awaken overnight and discover that they have become alien and foreigners. Backward industrially, educationally and economically, they will be left to the mercies [of] what would become an unadulterated Hindu raj. . . . Their position within the Pakistan State will be vulnerable and weak. Nowhere in Pakistan will their majority be comparable to the Hindu majority in the Hindustan States. . . . Their majority will be so slight that it will be offset by the economical, educational and political lead enjoyed by non-Muslims in these areas. Even if this were not so and Pakistan were overwhelmingly Muslim in population, it still could hardly solve the problem of Muslims in Hindustan.

Two states confronting one another, offer no solution of the problem of one another's minorities, but only lead to retribution and reprisals by introducing a system of mutual hostages. The scheme of Pakistan therefore solves no problem for the Muslims. . . . It may be argued that if Pakistan is so much against the interests of the Muslims themselves, why should such a large section of Muslims be swept away by its lure? . . . They argued that if Hindus were so opposed to Pakistan, surely it must be of benefit to Muslims. An atmosphere of emotional frenzy was created which made reasonable appraisal impossible and swept away, especially the younger and more impressionable among the Muslims. . . .

The formula which I have succeeded in making the Congress accept secures whatever merit the Pakistan scheme contains while all its defects and drawbacks are avoided. . . .

When India attains her destiny, she will forget the chapter of communal suspicion and conflict and face the problems of modern life from a modern point of view. Differences will no doubt persist, but they will be economic, not communal. Opposition among political parties will continue, but it will be based, not on religion but on economic and political issues. . . .

The League had moved further along the path of separatism since the Lahore Resolution of 1940 popularly described as the Pakistan Resolution. . . . The Cabinet Mission was not prepared to concede the demand. On the contrary, the Mission was in favour of a solution more or less on the lines I had suggested. . . .

I have already mentioned that the Cabinet Mission published its scheme on 16 May. Basically, it was the same as the one sketched in my statement of 15 April. The Cabinet Mission Plan provided that only three subjects would belong compulsorily to the Central Government. These were the three subjects—defence, foreign affairs and communications— . . . The Mission . . . added a new element to the Plan. It divided the country into three zones, A, B and C, as the members of the Mission felt that this would give a greater sense of assurance among the minorities. Section B would include Punjab, Sind, NWFP and British Baluchistan. This would constitute a Muslim majority area. In Section C,

which included Bengal and Assam the Muslims would have a small majority over the rest. The Cabinet Mission thought that this arrangement would give . . . assurance to the Muslim minority, and satisfy all legitimate fears of the League. . . .

Since the Cabinet Mission Plan was in spirit the same as mine and the only addition was the institution of the three sections I felt that we should accept the proposal.

At first Mr. Jinnah was completely opposed to the scheme. The Muslim League had gone so far in its demand for a separate independent State that it was difficult for it to retrace its steps. The Mission had stated in clear and unambiguous terms that they could never recommend the partition of the country and the formation of an independent State. . . . Mr. Jinnah had to admit that there could be no fairer solution of the minority problem than that presented in the Cabinet Mission Plan. . . . He advised the Muslim League to accept the scheme and the Council voted unanimously in its favour. . . .

The acceptance of Cabinet Mission Plan by both the Congress and the Muslim League was a glorious event in the history of the freedom movement in India. It meant that the difficult question of Indian freedom had been settled by negotiation and agreement and not by methods of violence and conflict. . . . We rejoiced but we did not then know that our joy was premature. . . .

The Working Committee met on 6 July and prepared . . . resolutions for the consideration of the AICC. . . . Then I moved the resolution on the Cabinet Mission Plan. . . . I further pointed out that the Cabinet Mission Plan had accepted in all essentials the Congress point of view. It guaranteed the unity of India, while at the same time it held out the necessary assurances to the minorities. The Congress had stood for the freedom and unity of India and opposed all fissiparous tendencies. . . .

My speech had a decisive influence on the audience. When the vote was taken, the resolution was passed with an overwhelming majority. Thus the seal of approval was put on the Working Committee's resolution accepting the Cabinet Mission Plan. . . .

Now happened one of those unfortunate events which change the course of history. On 10 July, Jawaharlal held a press conference in Bombay *in which he made an astonishing statement. . . . Press representatives asked him whether, with the passing of the Resolution by the AICC, the Congress had accepted the Plan in toto, including the composition of the Interim Government.*

Jawaharlal in reply stated that Congress would enter the Constituent Assembly "completely unfettered by agreements and free to meet all situations as they arise."

Press representatives further asked if this meant that the Cabinet Mission Plan could be modified.

Jawaharlal replied emphatically that the Congress had agreed only to participate in the Constituent Assembly and regarded itself free to change or modify the Cabinet Mission Plan. . . . *The Muslim League had accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan only under duress. Naturally, Mr. Jinnah was not very happy about*

it. In his speech to the League Council, he had clearly stated that he recommended acceptance only because nothing better could be obtained. . . . Jawaharlal's statement came to him as a bombshell. He immediately issued a statement that this declaration by the Congress President demanded a review of the whole situation. He accordingly asked Liaqat Ali Khan to call a meeting of the League Council and issued a statement to the following effect. The Muslim League Council had accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan in Delhi as it was assured that the Congress also had accepted the scheme and the Plan would be the basis of the future constitution of India. Now that the Congress President had declared that the Congress could change the scheme through its majority in the Constituent Assembly, this would mean that the minorities would be placed at the mercy of the majority. His view was that Jawaharlal's declaration meant that the Congress had rejected the Cabinet Mission Plan and . . . the Viceroy should call upon the Muslim League, which had accepted the Plan, to form the Government.

The Muslim League Council met at Bombay on 27 July. Mr. Jinnah in his opening speech reiterated the demand for Pakistan as the only course left open to the Muslim League. After three days' discussion, the Council passed a resolution rejecting the Cabinet Mission Plan. It also decided to resort to direct action for the achievement of Pakistan.

The unequivocal acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan by the Congress Working Committee led to an immediate response from the Viceroy. On 12 August, Jawaharlal was invited by him to form an interim Government at the Centre in the following terms:

His Excellency the Viceroy, with the approval of His Majesty's Government has invited the President of the Congress to make proposals for the immediate formation of an interim Government and the President of the Congress has accepted the invitation. . . .

Mr. Jinnah issued a statement the same day on which he said that "the latest resolution of the Congress Working Committee passed at Wardha on 10 August does not carry us anywhere." . . . On 15 August, Jawaharlal met Mr. Jinnah at his house. Nothing however came out of their discussion and the situation rapidly deteriorated.

When the League Council met at the end of July and decided to resort to direct action, it also authorised Mr. Jinnah to take any action he liked in pursuance of the programme. Mr. Jinnah declared 16 August the Direct Action Day, but he did not make it clear what the programme would be. . . . I noticed in Calcutta that a strange situation was developing. In the past, political parties had observed special days by organising hartals, taking out processions and holding meetings. The League's Direct Action Day seemed to be of a different type. In Calcutta, I found a general feeling that on 16 August, the Muslim League would attack Congressmen and loot Congress property. Further panic

was created when the Bengal Government decided to declare 16 August a public holiday. . . . There was a general sense of anxiety in Calcutta. . . .

16 August was a black day in the history of India. Mob violence unprecedented in the history of India plunged . . . Calcutta into an orgy of bloodshed, murder and terror. Hundreds of lives were lost. Thousands were injured and property worth crores of rupees was destroyed. Processions were taken out by the League which began to loot and commit acts of arson. . . . The whole city was in the grip of goondas [trouble-makers] of both . . . communities.

Sarat Chandra Bose had gone to the Governor and asked him to take immediate action to bring the situation under control. He also told the Governor that he and I were required to go to Delhi for a meeting of the Working Committee. The Governor told him that he would send the military to escort us to the airport. I waited for some time but nobody arrived. I then started on my own. The streets were deserted and the city had the appearance of death. As I was passing through Strand Road, I found that a number of cartmen and darwans were standing with staves in their hands. They attempted to attack my car. Even when my driver shouted that this was the car of the Congress President, they paid little heed. However, I got to Dum Dum. . . . I found there a large contingent of the military waiting in trucks. When I asked why they were not helping . . . they replied that their orders were to stand ready. . . . Throughout Calcutta, the military and the police were standing by . . . while innocent men and women were being killed.

Sixteen August 1946 was a black day not only for Calcutta but for the whole of India. The turn that events had taken made it almost impossible to expect a peaceful solution by agreement between the Congress and the Muslim League. *This was one of the greatest tragedies of Indian history and I have to say with the deepest of regret that a large part of the responsibility for this development rests with Jawaharlal. His unfortunate statement that the Congress would be free to modify the Cabinet Mission Plan reopened the whole question of political and communal settlement. Mr. Jinnah took full advantage of his mistake and withdrew from the League's early acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan.*

Jawaharlal is one of my dearest friends and his contribution to India's national life is second to none. *I have nevertheless to say with regret that this was not the first time that he did immense harm to the national cause. He had committed an almost equal blunder in 1937 when the first elections were held under the Government of India Act 1935. In these elections, the Muslim League had suffered a great setback throughout the country except in Bombay and the UP. . . . It was in the UP that the League attained its greatest success. . . .*

Chaudhari Khaliquzzaman and Nawab Ismail Khan were then the leaders of the Muslim League in the UP. When I came to Lucknow for forming the Government, I spoke to both of them. They assured me that they would not only cooperate with the Congress, but would fully support the Congress programme. They naturally expected that the Muslim League would have some

share in the new Government. The local position was such that neither of them could enter the Government alone. . . . I had therefore held out hopes that both would be taken into the Government. If the Ministry consisted of seven members only, two would be Muslim Leaguers and the rest would all be Congressmen. In a Cabinet of nine, the Congress majority would be still more marked. . . . A note was prepared to the effect that the Muslim League party . . . would . . . accept the Congress programme. Both Nawab Ismail Khan and Choudhari Khaliquzzaman signed this document, and I left. . . . I returned to Allahabad and found to my great regret that Jawaharlal had written to Choudhari Khaliquzzaman and Nawab Ismail Khan that only one of them could be taken into the Ministry. He had said that the Muslim League Party could decide who should be included. . . . Neither was in a position to come in alone. They therefore expressed their regret and said that they were unable to accept Jawaharlal's offer.

This was a most unfortunate development. If the League's offer of cooperation had been accepted, the Muslim League party would for all practical purposes merge with the Congress. Jawaharlal's action gave the Muslim League in the UP a new lease of life. . . . It was from the UP that the League was reorganised. Mr. Jinnah . . . started an offensive which . . . led to Pakistan.

The mistake in 1937 was bad enough. The mistake of 1946 proved even more costly. One may perhaps say in Jawaharlal's defence that he never expected the Muslim League to resort to direct action. Mr. Jinnah had never been a believer in mass movement. . . . He had perhaps hoped that when the Muslim League rejected the Cabinet Mission Plan, the British Government would reopen the whole question and hold further discussions. . . .

[In the fall of 1946, the Muslim League agreed to join the Interim government.]

Now that the League had agreed to join the Government, the Congress had to reconstitute the Government and accommodate the representatives of the League. We had to decide who should leave the Government. . . . Lord Wavell had suggested that one of the major portfolios should go to a representative of the League. His own suggestion was that we should give up the Home Department but Sardar Patel who was the Home Member vehemently opposed the suggestion. . . . I was therefore for accepting Lord Wavell's suggestion but Sardar Patel was adamant. He said that if we insisted, he would rather leave the Government than give up the Home Department. . . .

When Lord Wavell conveyed this information to Mr. Jinnah he said that he would give his reply the next day. . . . He had decided to nominate Liaquat Ali as the chief representative of the League in the Cabinet but he was doubtful if Liaquat could adequately handle Finance. Some Muslim officers of the Finance Department . . . contacted Mr. Jinnah. They told him that the offer . . . marked a great victory for the League. They had never expected that Congress would agree to hand over Finance to the Muslim League. . . . The League would have a say in every Department of the Government. They assured Mr. Jinnah that he

need have no fears. They would give every help to Mr. Liaquat Ali and ensure that he discharged his duties effectively. Mr. Jinnah accepted the proposal and . . . Liaquat Ali became the Member for Finance. . . .

In all countries, the Minister in charge of Finance plays a key role in the Government. In India, his position was even more important, for the British Government had treated the Finance Member as the custodian of its interests. This was a portfolio which had always been held by an Englishman specially brought to India for the purpose. The Finance Member could interfere in every Department, and dictate policy. When Liaquat Ali became the Finance Member, he then obtained possession of the key to the Government. Every proposal of every Department was subject to scrutiny by his Department. . . .

Sardar Patel had been very anxious about retaining the Home Membership. Now he realised that he had played into the hands of the League by offering it Finance. Whatever proposal he made was either rejected or modified beyond recognition by Liaquat Ali. His persistent interference made it difficult for any Congress Member to function effectively. Internal dissensions broke out within the Government and went on increasing.

I have already said that the League's rejection of the Cabinet Mission Plan had caused us a great deal of anxiety. I have also mentioned the step which the Working Committee took to meet the League's objection. This we did by passing a resolution on 10 August in which it was clearly stated that in spite of our dissatisfaction with some of the proposals contained in the Cabinet Mission Plan we accepted the scheme in its entirety. *This did not however satisfy Mr. Jinnah as he held that the Working Committee did not still state in categorical terms that the provinces would join the groups envisaged in the Cabinet Mission Plan.* The British Government and Lord Wavell generally agreed with the League on this particular point.

Looking back after ten years, I concede that there was force in what Mr. Jinnah said. The Congress and the League were both parties to the agreement, and it was on the basis of distribution among the Centre, the Provinces and the Groups that the League had accepted the Plan. Congress was neither wise nor right in raising doubts. It should have accepted the Plan unequivocally if it stood for the unity of India. . . .

On the one hand, communal passions were mounting. On the other, the administration was becoming lax. Europeans in the services no longer had their heart in the work. . . . The situation was made worse by the deadlock between the Congress and the Muslim League within the Executive Council. . . . There were some very able and senior Muslim officers in the Finance Department who gave every possible help to Liaquat Ali. With their advice Liaquat Ali was able to reject or delay every proposal put up by the Congress members of the Executive Council. . . .

A truly pathetic situation had developed as a result of our own foolish action in giving Finance to the Muslim League. Lord Mountbatten took full advantage

of the situation. Because of the dissensions among the members, he slowly and gradually assumed full powers. . . . He started to mediate between the Congress and the League to get his own way. He also began to give a new turn to the political problem and tried to impress on both the Congress and the Muslim League the inevitability of Pakistan. He pleaded in favour of Pakistan and sowed the seeds of the idea in the minds of the Congress members of the Executive Council.

It must be placed on record that the man in India who first fell for Lord Mountbatten's idea was Sardar Patel. Till perhaps the very end Pakistan was for Jinnah a bargaining counter, but in fighting for Pakistan, he had overreached himself. His action had so annoyed and irritated Sardar Patel that the Sardar was now a believer in partition. The Sardar's was the responsibility for giving Finance to the Muslim League. He therefore resented his helplessness before Liaquat Ali more than anybody else. When Lord Mountbatten suggested that partition might offer a solution to the present difficulty, he found ready acceptance to the idea in Sardar Patel's mind. . . . It would not perhaps be unfair to say that Vallabhbhai Patel was the founder of Indian partition.

Lord Mountbatten was extremely intelligent and could read into the minds of all his Indian colleagues. The moment he found Patel amenable to his idea he put out all the charm and power of his personality to win over the Sardar. In his private talk, he always referred to Patel as a walnut—a very hard crust outside but soft pulp once the crust was cracked. . . . When Sardar Patel was convinced, Lord Mountbatten turned his attention to Jawaharlal. Jawaharlal was not at first ready for the idea and reacted violently against the idea of partition. Lord Mountbatten persisted till Jawaharlal's opposition was worn down. . . . Within a month of Lord Mountbatten's arrival in India, Jawaharlal, the firm opponent of partition had become . . . acquiescent to the idea.

When I became aware that Lord Mountbatten was thinking in terms of dividing India and had persuaded Jawaharlal and Patel, I was deeply distressed. . . . Partition of India would be harmful not only to Muslims but to the whole country. . . . I was also convinced that if the Constitution for free India was framed on this basis and worked honestly . . . communal doubts and misgivings would soon disappear. The real problems of the country were economic, not communal. . . .

I did my best to persuade my two colleagues not to take the final step. I found that Patel was so much in favour of partition that he was hardly prepared even to listen to any other point of view. . . . I pointed out that if we accepted partition, we could create a permanent problem for India. Partition would not solve the communal problem but would make it a permanent feature of the country. Jinnah had raised the slogan of two nations. To accept partition was to accept that slogan. How could Congress ever agree to divide the country on the basis of Hindus and Muslims? Instead of removing communal fears, partition would perpetuate them by creating two States based on communal hatred.

Once States based on hatred came into existence, nobody knew where the situation would lead.

Now that Sardar Patel and even Jawaharlal had become supporters of partition, Gandhiji remained my only hope. . . . We expected that he would come to Delhi to meet Mountbatten and he actually arrived on 31 March. I went to see him at once and his very first remark was, "Partition has now become a threat. It seems Vallabhbhai and even Jawaharlal have surrendered. What will you do now? Will you stand by me or have you also changed?"

I replied, "I have been and am against partition. Never has my opposition to partition been so strong as today. I am however distressed to find that even Jawaharlal and Patel have accepted defeat and . . . surrendered their arms. My only hope now is in you. If you stand against partition, we may yet save the situation. If you however acquiesce, I am afraid India is lost."

Gandhiji said, "What a question to ask! If the Congress wishes to accept partition, it will be over my dead body. So long as I am alive I will never agree to the partition of India." . . .

Later that day Gandhiji met Lord Mountbatten. . . . But when I met Gandhiji again, I received the greatest shock of my life to find that he had changed. He was still not openly in favour of partition but he no longer spoke so vehemently against it. What surprised and shocked me even more was that he began to repeat the arguments which Sardar Patel had already used. . . .

The AICC met on 14 June 1947. . . . Congress which had always fought for the unity and independence of India was now considering a . . . resolution for dividing the country. Pandit . . . Pant moved the resolution and after Sardar Patel and Jawaharlal spoke on it. . . . It was impossible for me to tolerate this abject surrender on the part of the Congress. In my speech I clearly said that the decision which the Working Committee had reached was the result of a most unfortunate development. Partition was a tragedy for India and the only thing that could be said in its favour was that we had done our best to avoid division but we had failed. . . . If we wanted freedom here and now, we must submit to the demand for dividing India. We must not however forget that the nation is one and its cultural life is and will remain one. Politically we had failed and were therefore dividing the country. We should accept our defeat but we should at the same time try to ensure that our culture was not divided.

When the resolution was put to the vote, 29 voted for it and 15 against. . . . Even those who accepted partition had all their feelings against it. What was worse was the kind of insidious communal propaganda which was gaining ground. It was being openly said in Congress circles that Hindus in Pakistan need not have any fears as there would be four and a half crores of Muslims in India and if there was any oppression of Hindus in Pakistan, the Muslims in India would have to bear the consequences. . . . I immediately saw that this was a dangerous sentiment and could have the most unfortunate and far-reaching repercussions. It implied that partition was being accepted on the basis that in

both India and Pakistan, there would be hostages who would be held responsible for the security of the minority community in the other State. The idea of retaliation as a method of assuring the rights of minorities seemed to me barbarous. Later events proved how justified my apprehensions were. The river of blood which flowed after partition on both sides of the new Frontier grew out of this sentiment of hostages and retaliation.

[From Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1988), 146–153, 156–158, 163–166, 168–172, 177–179, 185, 196–198, 200–203, 214–216.]

BEGUM SHAISTA IKRAMULLAH: A MUSLIM LEAGUE VIEW OF PARTITION

Jinnah did not leave the kind of intimate record or account of the events leading to Partition and independence that several congressmen left. Among the few valuable Muslim League accounts is that of Begum Shaista Ikramullah (1915–2000) in *From Purdah to Parliament*. Writing some years after Partition, Begum Ikramullah presents the view of an active and intelligent Muslim Leaguer devoted to Jinnah. Her account may be compared with that of Azad.

Begum Ikramullah came from a distinguished Muslim family of Bengal; she was the only daughter of Sir Hassan Suhrawardy, doctor and politician, and was the niece of Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, chief minister of Bengal in the crucial years 1946–1947. Begum Ikramullah was prominent in the politics of Pakistan in the decade after independence. She was well educated, having earned a doctorate at London University with a thesis on the development of Urdu literature. Drawn into politics after her marriage to civil servant Mohammad Ikramullah in 1933, she worked with the Muslim League Women's Sub-Committee. She was closely associated with Fatima Jinnah in setting up the Muslim Women Students' Federation. Students and women were very active in the growth of Muslim League support among Indian Muslims in the 1940s. Begum Ikramullah was elected to the Constituent Assembly in 1946, and later served in the Pakistan Constituent Assembly.

Though from Bengal, she was an Urdu-speaking Muslim who tried to balance and understand the political demands from the eastern as well as western wings of Pakistan. After independence, her husband served as foreign secretary and as ambassador to several countries. She served in Pakistan's United Nations delegation, participated in the drawing up of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), and later was ambassador to Morocco. One of her daughters married into the Jordanian royal family and another, Salma, a barrister, married Rehman Sobhan, a leading economist of Bangladesh.

CHERISHED ENCOUNTERS WITH JINNAH

The Muslim League had been reorganized in 1937 under the presidency of Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah but it was still weak. It had not captured sufficient seats even in the Muslim majority Provinces to form a 100 per cent Muslim League

Government, but in each of the Provincial legislatures it was the largest Muslim party; yet when the Congress Ministries were formed in the seven Provinces not one League member found a place in any of them. A Muslim was taken here and there but the Muslims contended that the man thus chosen was a nominee of the Hindus and not their true representative. But weak though the Muslim League was in 1937 it was a mistake for the Congress to ignore it as completely as they did. Of course they did not know that the dynamic personality of Mohammad Ali Jinnah was going to transform that loosely organized ineffectual body into a well-knit, superbly disciplined, organization which in seven brief years was to formulate a demand, gain support for it and achieve what it set out to get. They cannot be blamed for not foreseeing this, one of the greatest miracles of modern times, but they were wrong to ignore the aspirations of the Muslims, because they were not then strong enough to present their case forcefully. In not a single province did Congress try to come to any understanding with the Muslim League Party. But that was not the only instance of their ignoring Muslim sentiments. The heady wine of power went to the head of the Congress Ministries. They passed laws forcing Muslim children to attend government schools which in their tone were completely Hindu, to salute the Congress flag, to sing the *Bande Mataram*. Petty Hindu officials harassed Muslims everywhere. A hundred and one small pin-pricks and irritations cropped up daily; unimportant in themselves, they were like the proverbial leaf which indicated the way the wind was blowing, and the indication in this case was that it was blowing toward Hindu imperialism and Hindu domination which would attempt to exterminate eight hundred years of Muslim influence and culture. Alarm and panic swept through the Muslims and resulted in the strengthening of the Muslim League. It also resulted in great bitterness, so that when the Congress Ministries resigned in September 1939, the Muslim League ordered a "Deliverance Day" to be celebrated throughout the length and breadth of India.

That is why New Delhi of 1940 was different from that of '33. India had come a stage nearer independence and, because of that, Indians were less eager to ape their rulers. This difference I was to feel almost immediately on my arrival. The second change, namely the growing rift between the two communities, I was not to be aware of for some little while yet. In my three years' absence from India, though bits of news had come to me and every now and then I read an article in some Urdu magazine protesting against Congress attempts to stamp out Urdu or stating the injustices Muslims were suffering under Congress rule, I had not realized its extent.

It was a very trivial incident that brought home to me how Hindu communalism had grown in the last few years. A Hindu friend of mine objected to my using the word "Begum" as it underlined the fact of my being Muslim. . . . It certainly had no communal intention, and Hindu objection to it showed the extent of their narrow-mindedness.

But the event that was to change the course of my life was yet to occur. In October, 1941, my father came from England on leave and came to stay with me

in my house in New Delhi. One morning he said to me, "I am going to see Mr. Jinnah. You come along with me."

"Oh, I don't think I will," said I. "I believe he is very rude and snubs everybody."

"Don't be silly," said my father. "That is just Hindu propaganda. I want you to meet him."

So I went rather reluctantly and apprehensively. . . .

My father had certain proposals which he wanted to discuss. He felt that, as Adviser to the Secretary of State for India, he might be able to bring about some sort of understanding between the British Government and the Muslim League. Quaid listened to what Father had to say very attentively and began to explain his point of view. And then, before I knew what I was doing, I was asking Quaid questions and he was answering them!—not impatiently or brusquely but kindly and in great detail. Quaid-i-Azam, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the President of the All India Muslim League, the leader of the majority of the Muslims of the Indian sub-continent, reported to be arrogant and dictatorial, was allowing a completely inexperienced, unimportant young person to argue with him and was taking the trouble of meeting her arguments! The wonder of it did not strike me for the moment as I was carried away [with] the fascination of listening to Quaid.

Now, after nearly twenty years, during which I have met some very great statesmen, I still maintain that to listen to Quaid and not be convinced was not possible. It was not that he overruled you, it was not that he did not reply to your argument, but that he was so thoroughly, so single-mindedly, so intensely convinced of the truth of his point of view that you could not help but be convinced also. You felt that if a man with an intellect so much superior to yours believed this, then it must be right. Call it hypnotism or what you will, that is the effect he had on me. . . . He had it on all who came in contact with him. . . .

I always mention this [low attendance at Muslim women's conferences], for it shows how little interest in politics there was amongst women in February '42 and how quickly and rapidly political consciousness grew, for in March, 1947, when in this self-same hall we organized a meeting of the Muslim League Women's Sub-Committee which Quaid-i-Azam honoured by coming and addressing, the hall was packed to capacity. . . .

The Conference lasted three days and followed the usual procedure. Subject committee meetings were held, resolutions passed, and speeches made. . . . None of us had really pushed the idea of Pakistan to its logical conclusion. The demand for Pakistan was an assertion of our separate, independent, religious, and cultural existence. We feared and objected to the assimilation being attempted, for we were proud of our culture and wanted to keep it intact. We wanted political power to enable us to preserve it. If we could have been assured that our religion, language and culture would be respected, that it would be possible for us to live our own way of life, then we would not have forged ahead

and fought for political independence, which we did not originally seek. . . . We merely wanted safeguards. . . .

But it was dawning on our leaders that if we wished to preserve our culture, then we must have a country of our own to enable us to do so. And that is why, after only three years as President of the Muslim League, Quaid-i-Azam had already put forward the resolution that the Muslim majority continuous areas should form a separate sovereign state of Pakistan. The Lahore Resolution, as this epoch-making resolution was called, had been passed in March, 1940, that is six months after the Second World War had begun, and it was now February '42.

However, to the majority of Muslims Pakistan was an idea rather than a reality, something they thought was their inviolable right but which they had not yet decided to exercise. The most ardent of Muslim leaders at this stage still hoped that it would be possible to come to a compromise which would enable Muslims to continue as a separate cultural entity within a wider political framework. Quaid-i-Azam himself favoured this. I definitely remember him telling me at that first meeting we had with him that the Canadian Constitution would probably be the best solution for us, and the fact that for seven years after the passing of the Pakistan Resolution he agreed to discuss and negotiate with the British and Congress and more than once almost came to agreement, is further proof. That an agreement was not reached is not because of Quaid-i-Azam's intransigence but because of the narrow-mindedness and bigotry of the Congress. . . .

There was no doubt in our minds that we stood in danger of the annihilation of our culture and that if we wanted to preserve it and our separate entity we had to organize ourselves into an effective body. This the Muslim League was enabling us to do, and therefore was daily succeeding in getting more and more support.

The Conference came to an end after the passing of the resolution supporting the demand for the establishment of Pakistan and for the preservation . . . of Urdu, and some other resolutions concerned exclusively with students' affairs. . . . It was the beginning of political consciousness amongst Muslim women, and, as such, was of great importance. For me personally it was an achievement. I had . . . single handed[ly] organized and called an All Indian Conference. . . .

In April, 1943, the All Indian Muslim League held its Annual Session in Delhi. This was one of the most important sessions of the League since the passing of the Pakistan Resolution. . . . The Muslim League had grown tremendously in importance. . . . It was only Quaid-i-Azam's leadership that had managed to steer it clear of pitfalls and dealt with each crisis in a manner which made it come out at the end stronger than before.

Congress had followed the resignation of its Ministries by launching a fully-fledged direct movement against the British.

The 1942 disturbances, as they were called, were really an abortive rebellion. They did not succeed because the British took prompt and drastic measures, but despite that they caused tremendous loss of life and property. . . .

The Muslim League kept itself aloof from this movement and was criticized by Congress, and by the nationalist Muslims as well, for not taking part in what was, from their point of view, a war of liberation. Quaid-i-Azam kept the League aloof and prevented it from getting involved in violence because he did not think it was strong enough to withstand the repercussions that would have followed. Congress could and did; for it had been organized forty years ago. It was now sufficiently entrenched to risk taking direct action and its leaders being arrested without running the risk of completely going to pieces. But the League could not; it was still at the stage of being welded together. Had its leaders been put in gaol in 1942, or I should say its leader for it only had Quaid-i-Azam, it would have broken up. He realized that for the League to plunge into action before it was strong enough internally would be suicidal. The oft-flung accusation that he was frightened of going to gaol weighed nothing with him, for he was a man who was swayed by neither praise nor blame. . . . Had he not been such a man he could not have done what he did, that is—to quote him own words: “make a disorganized mob into a disciplined nation.”

To achieve this end it was necessary not only to keep the Muslim League from precipitate action but also to restrain some of its prominent members from taking independent uncoordinated action. While he did not think the League was ready for direct action he was not in favour of whole-hearted co-operation in the war effort because he felt that the Muslim point of view was not receiving the consideration it deserved from the British. This involved him in direct conflict with prominent Muslim Leaguers among whom was Mr. Fazlul Haq, the Chief Minister of Bengal. His refusal to resign from the Defence Council when asked by the League to do so caused the first serious crisis in its ranks. . . .

My husband had not seen Quaid for two years, when we had all lunched at his place. But at the end of the Simla Conference, when I went to say goodbye to Quaid, he came to pick me up and met Quaid again. He discussed the cause that had led to the failure of the Simla Conference, and I remember his looking very thoughtful and preoccupied as we stood at the door of the Hotel Cecil waiting for our rickshaw to be called. Then looking at the hills, remote and silent witnesses to human conflict and turmoil, he said: “You’re right. He really means to have Pakistan.” “Of course, he does,” I said indignantly.

That was so but it was not because Quaid disregarded other people’s points of view or forced his opinion on them, he did not. . . . He had what few people possess in this world, an absolutely single-minded conviction. It somehow had the effect of removing all one’s doubts. To say that he was a dictator and forced Mussulmans to accept his idea of Pakistan is ridiculous because he had no arbitrary powers—only the force of his own personality. . . .

During those years in Delhi, my life was full of varied interests and activities. . . . That I would ever have to leave this city which I loved in its every mood, as one does a person, I never even dreamt. The frontiers of Pakistan had not been defined and it never entered our heads that Delhi would not be included within it. How sure we were that Delhi was ours and would come to us can best be illustrated by this incident. We were having a picnic on the terrace at Humayun's Tomb one afternoon, when my sister-in-law remarked: "Do you think you will get Delhi if Pakistan is established?" My husband replied pointing to the domed and turreted skyline of Delhi: "Look at it—whom do you think it seems to belong to?" and Dina could not deny that the essentially Muslim character of its architecture seemed to proclaim that Delhi belonged to the Muslims. And so it did, in every way, except population. . . .

The failure of the Simla Conference in the summer of 1945 caused tension and bitterness. Elections, following in 1946, further intensified this—one could feel it everywhere. Social relations between Hindus and Muslims which, up till now, had been free and easy, became increasingly strained. . . . Thinking men of every party were beginning to get alarmed.

And everyone began to realize the urgency of coming to an agreement soon. Now that the election results had clearly and unmistakably shown the Congress and the Muslim League to be the two political parties claiming the allegiance respectively of the Hindus and Muslims, Britain had to . . . reconcile their claims, so that a transfer of power might be possible.

For this purpose a Parliamentary Delegation composed of Lord Pethick Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps, and Mr. A. V. Alexander came out, bringing with them what came to be known as the Cabinet Mission Plan. The subsequent division of the Indian sub-continent was based more or less on the proposals contained in this plan, though, at this stage, it was still hoped that it would not be necessary to follow it. But by conceding the maximum amount of autonomy to the Provinces, within a united framework, the claims both of Congress and the Muslims League would be met. And for a brief period that hope looked like being realized. . . .

But this . . . hope was very short-lived. On the 9th June, I attended the League Council meeting. The next morning I left for Calcutta, for my father was very ill, and from now on, for the next year, while the dramatic struggle of the people of India was reaching its climax, I went through a period of great personal anguish and suffering. . . . For this year in the history of India and Pakistan can truly be called a black year. The short-lived agreement between the Congress and the Muslim League had come to naught and thus resulted in the long pent-up tension and hatred breaking out into terrible communal riots all over the country. Calcutta, my home town, where my father lay ill, was the scene of the first of the terrible riots that were to break out in India with increasing ferocity during the next few months. My cousin, Shaheed Suhrawardy, was the Prime

Minister of Bengal at this fatal hour and this made us, the members of his family, somehow feel more responsible for what was happening. . . .

Once again we are too near the events . . . to take a really objective view of the horror that began on the 16th August, 1946; it lasted for four whole days, but the effects lasted for months, and in fact, can even be said to have lasted until today.

This briefly is what had happened since the 9th June, 1946. Congress had repudiated the agreement reached in Simla. It began by Pandit Nehru's statement in the Press on the 12th July that he had accepted nothing but the convening of a Constituent Assembly, to which the British would transfer power and then get out, after which all questions would be decided by the majority vote, which meant by the Hindus, as they were in absolute majority. It meant that none of the provisions regarding the division of power between the provinces and the Central Government could be taken as binding. That meant that the Muslim majority provinces of Punjab, Bengal, Sind, N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan could not expect to be virtually autonomous, as proposed by the Cabinet Mission Plan, but could be subject to the Central Government in every detail. This statement of Pandit Nehru was preceded and followed by statements by other Congress Leaders. It created a wave of distrust among the Muslims, who reiterated the demand for Pakistan, saying that they could never hope to have a fair deal within a united framework. . . .

It seemed after all we would not get our rights through negotiation and would have to be ready for action. This was the gist of most of the speeches delivered in the Bombay session, and it was decided to hold a Direct Action Day when the future plan of action of the League was to be explained to Muslims all over the country.

It was on Direct Action Day that the Calcutta riots broke out, and the Congress has always tried to fasten the blame for this on the Muslim League, but as far as I can judge the matter dispassionately I feel that this is not true. In fact, nothing was planned for Direct Action Day except large-scale meetings all over the country, and it was while the Muslims of Calcutta were attending such a meeting that the riot broke out, *not in* the area of the meeting, but in the areas of the unprotected homes of these people. And the carnage that took place during these first few hours, where women and children fell as completely helpless and defenceless victims, was greater than the subsequent retaliatory attacks by the Muslims on the predominantly Hindu areas. . . .

It made me realize what a terrible responsibility we take on ourselves when we champion a cause and ask people to be ready to sacrifice and die for it. How few of us realize, as these words glibly pass our lips, what it actually costs people in blood and tears. . . .

There is no doubt that the increasing lawlessness in India alarmed the British, but it was not this that made them decide to quit India. There had been rioting and civil disturbances in India before, and they had managed to quell

them and remain here. But something else had happened . . . which made the British realize that the time had come for them to leave. This was the I.N.A. trials and the reaction they had [in] the length and breadth of India. . . .

I cannot remember what the prosecution case was, I know that it was a brief one, after which Desai got up and opened the case for the defence . . . As he ended his speech with the words, "If it be treason to try and break the shackles of foreign rule, then these men are traitors; if it be treason to adopt whatever means presents itself to free one's country from hated foreign rule, then these men are traitors; if it be treason to work to free one's country from bondage, then these men are traitors, and not only these men, all of us are traitors. All of us, every man, woman, and child in India, are today working for the same end."

There was such tension in the atmosphere that one could almost feel it. Desai had expressed what, rightly or wrongly, was felt about the I.N.A. by everybody in India. . . .

Pakistan was established on the 14th August, 1947. My baby was barely three weeks old, and it was impossible for me to travel. I longed to be in Karachi and to take part in the joyful celebrations that were taking place there, but I could not do so. . . .

The next day was the 15th August, the day of the Indian Independence. Since the Calcutta riots, things had never been normal in Calcutta, and for the last few weeks as the day of the Independence drew near, tension had reached fever pitch. It was rumoured that Hindus meant to wreak their vengeance on the Muslims on the day. This was no idle rumour, there was concrete proof that a large-scale disturbance was being planned. That it did not take place is almost a miracle, and this miracle was brought about by the superhuman efforts of Gandhi and my cousin Shaheed Suhrawardy.

Gandhi was proceeding to Noakhali, to be there in case fresh rioting should break out. He had to pass through Calcutta to go to Noakhali. My cousin . . . said to him that it was Calcutta and not Noakhali he was needed at. . . . By staying here Gandhi could stop a flare-up. Gandhi said he would agree to stay on and do what he could, provided my cousin agreed to work with him.

Agreeing to work with Gandhi meant, of course, agreeing to work in his way. In this case, it meant going and staying in a mud hut in the poorest and most badly affected part of the town, eating vegetarian food and following the routine that he followed. This must have entailed a lot of discomfort for a person like my cousin who was used to a very different sort of life, but so great was his desire to prevent another holocaust that he agreed to these conditions and carried them out meticulously for over a fortnight. It also meant facing much physical danger; several attacks were made on his life, and his car was blown up by a hand grenade, but he persisted in the task he had undertaken.

Gandhi and Shaheed Suhrawardy started their crusade for peace together on the 11th August. They went to different parts of the town and held meetings in which they exhorted people to be worthy of the new independence that was

coming to them, and asked Hindus to treat Muslims as their brothers and asked Muslims to think of Hindus in the same way. They sent volunteers in lorries shouting peace slogans all over the city, and somehow managed in three or four days to ease the tension and bring out an upsurge of goodwill. For on the 15th August, the day that was dreaded, Hindus and Muslims instead of killing each other fraternized together and celebrated the coming of independence joyfully. It was a wonderful achievement and I am proud of the part my cousin played in it. . . . He showed courage, boldness and most of all, a real concern for the people's welfare.

This act of my cousin was misconstrued by his enemies and eventually cost him his career in Pakistan, though in actual fact this was . . . a great service to the newly established State of Pakistan. . . . If he had not acted in the way he did, riots would have broken out in Calcutta also, in which case Pakistan would have had to cope with an influx of refugees on both its fronts. . . .

We had been given a house in Clifton, a suburb of Karachi. . . . I went into Karachi to look at the city which was now going to be my home. I saw the flag fluttering from the Government House and realized that it was now inhabited by Mr. Jinnah. I, who for years had avoided calling at Government House, immediately went in and signed my name in the visitors' book with a flourish. I beamed at the policeman and the A.D.C.s, for all these appurtenances to the British Raj had now become the symbols of our own sovereignty. We were now a nation and a state, the realization went to my head like wine. . . .

But there was no time to indulge in ecstasy or joyful celebrations, for the price paid for Pakistan was very great indeed: no less than five million people had been uprooted, many thousands of whom had been killed, their houses looted and their womenfolk raped. Now they trekked their way to the newly established State. This had begun twenty-four hours after Pakistan came into existence, and before the State was more than a few days old it had to face the alarming task of absorbing five million people. That it could do so was a miracle. . . .

What the world has not understood yet is why it came about. Why should one hundred million Muslims in India have decided to carve out a state for themselves at the cost of such terrible suffering? This has not yet been understood by the world at large, for no one has taken the trouble to understand the particular psychology of the Indian Muslims. . . .

I have often heard people say: "Isn't it remarkable that in the brief period of seven years, Jinnah put forward the idea of Pakistan, had it accepted by the people and sanctioned by the British?," but that is not so. It is true the demand for Pakistan was made only seven years before it was established, but this demand only gave concrete expression to the dream of the Indian Muslims to have "a local habitation and a name." This dream they had cherished since 1857. . . . But I must go back farther than that in order to explain it all.

Muslims had come to India as conquerors and for eight hundred years had ruled the country. During this period, they had settled down and married and

accepted many of the customs of the land of their adoption, but had never become absolutely one with the people of the country. The reason for this continued detachment lay in the religion these people followed. It baffles Westerners that it should be so. . . . Religion did make different people of them, influencing their way of life. . . . Hinduism had hitherto absorbed most other conquerors, but the clear-cut tenets of Islam defied amalgamation with any other creed. . . . The rigid caste system of the Hindus . . . prevented any possibility of free social intercourse . . . [and] there was also the gulf separating the rulers from the ruled. . . . Though in the case of the Muslims and Hindus, the gulf was not as great as between the British and the Indians, it still existed.

When the Muslim rule in India was succeeded by the British, the basic difference between the two peoples did not disappear. If anything, it grew stronger. The Muslims felt themselves threatened both by the supremacy of the British as rulers and by the numerical superiority of the Hindus. . . . They held more tenaciously to their own way of life[,] . . . to every little thing that made their culture different from the Hindus. These differences may seem trivial . . . but to the Muslims they were like sentinels guarding their separate existence in a sea of aliens.

[From Begum Shaista S. Ikramullah, *From Purdah to Parliament* (London: Crescent Press, 1963), 86–88, 89, 99–102, 103, 118–119, 135–136, 137–138, 139–140, 141, 142, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155–157, 158–161.]

URVASHI BUTALIA: SURVIVORS' ORAL ACCOUNTS

The events that led up to Partition, and then the division of the subcontinent as the British exited, affected millions of ordinary people. Most of the documents above describe the views and actions of the elite actors in this immense drama. For the impact of these events on the lives of the many, we have to turn to extracts from an excellent work of oral history by Urvashi Butalia, a director and cofounder of the feminist organization Kali for Women, who spent years gathering these stories on both sides of the border and putting them in vivid shape for her readers.

STORIES OF FLIGHT, ABDUCTION, AND HONOR KILLING

FROM 3. "FACTS"

In 1990 Sudesh and I began to speak to Rajinder Singh, a three-wheeler scooter driver in Delhi. We boarded his scooter, to get from one part of the city to another. Somewhere along the way, because he looked the right age, we asked him where he was from. He suggested that we come to his home and he would tell us his story. The story took us to Gandhi Nagar, a resettlement area on the

outskirts of Delhi where Rajinder Singh and his family lived in a small house set deep in a narrow, crowded lane. As with all the families we visited, they welcomed us into their homes as if we belonged there. The several sessions during which we interviewed him and his brother, Manmohan Singh, were interspersed with long conversations with neighbours . . . who had their own stories to tell. . . . Rajinder or Manmohan asked themselves if they should be telling us this. As always in family situations, we seldom got to speak to the wives. . . . We later decided not to attempt to speak to men and women at the same time, but to do so separately.

Partition meant many different things to different people. For Rajinder Singh, his most powerful memory is not of the event itself but of something that took place a few years earlier when, as a young boy, he ran away from home to join a group of street singers and prostitutes in Hira Mandi in Lahore. Four years after his disappearance, his father managed to track him down and went to the kothah [courtesans' house] to fetch him back. The young Rajinder watched from the roof of the kotha as his father walked through the marketplace, he listened to the jibes and taunts directed at the old man, and then saw him being deliberately tripped by a flower seller at the foot of the stairs of his "home." As he fell, Rajinder's father's turban came loose and rolled off, the ultimate loss of honour for a Sikh. Broken, the old man gathered up his turban and walked slowly away. Torn between his wish to stay on in a place which he loved and his compassion for his father, Rajinder followed him to the railway station, and . . . to his home where he then began a job in a utensil factory. . . .

It was there that he first came across evidence of the divisions that became much more visible after Partition. The factory owner, a Hindu, employed Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims and, as Partition drew closer, fights began to break out between them. Rajinder has no special feelings of enmity or hatred towards his Muslim co-workers. . . . Like many people who did not have a "profession," Rajinder turned his hand to different things after he crossed over to India: he worked in a halvai [sweet] shop in Amritsar, later set up his own halvai shop, drove a tonga for a while, and when we met him, was driving a scooter which he owned. I have chosen to include a section of Rajinder's interview here because he describes how people from his family and his village came away on foot, in a kafila [caravan] that grew as more and more people joined it. Up to a certain distance the kafila was accompanied, and presumably protected, by the Pakistani army, and then the Indian army took over. He said he had never really told this story to anyone before. . . . Yet, as we sat and spoke, family members came in again and again and asked us to replay this or that incident, as if listening to his voice on tape somehow invested it with a greater authority. . . . I find Rajinder's account moving, for its sense of inexorable, slow, tortuous movement as people headed . . . from a life shattered by forces beyond their control, into an unknown future. In his words, "Our hearts were full of fear—where were we

headed? Where would we end up?”—a question that runs through virtually every Partition narrative . . .

Rajinder Singh:

“My bua’s [older sister’s] older son’s in-laws lived in a village called Richade. My brother went there with my bua’s younger son. He thought, we have to go out this way anyway, so let’s go little by little so that everyone does not get killed all at once. We sort of knew we would have to die anyway, so we thought that if we spread ourselves out then we could perhaps see if one or the other could be saved. I went to fetch my wife . . . but I was worried that my brother would get left behind. So we all came to a place called Baba Lakhan, we came there and people from that village stopped there. I said to them, there are so few of you, why don’t you also include people from this village. There are many Sikhs, include them and our kafilā will grow large and become strong. As it is there are only a few people from this one village, why not increase the size of the kafilā? In this way we kept progressing and others joining up and the kafilā kept growing. We went to another village and found that everyone there was sleeping comfortably . . . When we went and told them, they said, no, can these sorts of things ever happen? I said to them if they have not happened before, they have happened today. If you think these kinds of things will not happen, you are mistaken, they are happening. So some of the older people started to pay attention. They asked, are you speaking the truth? I said, yes, go outside and look, go to Baba Lakhan. There are many people there, waiting . . . When we came back to Baba Lakhan we found people from two more villages had collected there. Now there were some thousand people or so . . . earlier there had only been four or five hundred . . . Hindus, Sikhs . . . Whatever people could pick up, big things and small, they put clothes on top of those they were wearing, and threw a khes or sheet over their shoulders. They picked up whatever they could and then they joined the kafilā. Who could take along heavy things? And the kafilā began to move. The next village on the way was Katiana. There, there was a marriage, a Musalmaan’s wedding, and there were a lot of fireworks and things going on. We thought there was firing and guns, so we stopped the kafilā some distance away from the village. Some people said they would go and find out . . . as they were leaving people said to them, you should be careful, don’t go openly. It shouldn’t happen that you have gone to find out and you just get killed yourself . . . they went . . . and they heard music and realized it was a wedding!

“Gradually, daylight came. This was the first night, and then it became morning and as the sun rose, it began to rain. It rained so much and our clothes became so heavy . . . we could not even lift them. Our clothes got more and more wet, and people just left them there. Our stomachs were empty, we were hungry, our clothes were wet and sodden, our hearts were full of fear—where were we headed? Where would we end up? Our hearts were full of grief: what

will happen? Where will we go? It's like when you started from home today, you knew you were going to Gandhi Nagar. We did not even know this. Which nagar [city], which side, which direction . . . we had no desire to eat, nor was there anything to eat. After all, when we left our homes, we did not carry our atta [grain] with us, we did not take the rotis from our tavas [metal griddles]. We did not think that we will take atta and knead it and cook it. We just left, as we were, empty-handed. Then some people fell ill—some fell ill from grief, some got diarrhoea, some had fever . . . so many people had left all of a sudden, they could not all be healthy and stay well. Some were ill from before, some fell ill from sorrow, and then there was rain and then the sun. The heat and cold made people's bodies shrivel up . . . from . . . these changes people fell ill . . . it was afternoon in Batiana before we knew it.

"There was one woman who was pregnant and about to give birth. The whole kafila began moving, but she was already a little upset and she said, you people go on ahead, I am prepared to die. In any case, I have no one to call my own. The hardship I have to face, I will bear, don't worry about me . . . the baba who was with me, I said to him, baba, it is given to some people to do good. Your granddaughter was with you and you decided to come with me. I kept telling you why bother . . . but look at this poor woman, she is about to give birth, she is a young woman, and here she is lying in the road . . . let us try to do good. We are all full of grief, we are all weeping. He said, what is it? I said, look at that girl, she has no brother or father, and she is alone, her man has been killed and she is about to give birth. There were some other women sitting with her, and when the kafila began to move, they too started to move. So my baba said, girl sit on my horse, and wherever we find someone who can help, we will take you there. But perhaps from fear, she gave birth right there, to a daughter. Out of fear. No one had a knife or anything, you know the instruments you need to cut the cord. There was one man, and he had a kind of sword, we asked him, baba, this is the thing, please help us. So he gave it to us and the women cut the cord, and we stopped the kafila for about three quarters of an hour. We said to them, you are leaving your honour behind to go to the houses of unknown people. Even if you get a little late, how does it matter? On the way there was a village called Pasroor. We had the Baluchi military with us. They put us in a school there. They said, anyone who tries to get out of here, out of these four walls, we will cut him down. The school had a four-foot-high wall. They tried to be strict but we had nothing to eat or drink . . . so people went, they broke into a shop and they brought some sacks of mungphalis [peanuts], so we roasted those and ate them. After all, what else could we do? Someone got this much and someone got that much. Then someone else jumped the wall and got to the sugarcane fields nearby to steal sugarcane. The military people killed some of them—in front of us they killed a Jat. His family had a cart, they had loaded things on to it and brought it, so they set fire to it and used it for the last rites of their man who was killed . . .

"After Narowar, the Madras military joined the kafila . . . they told the Baluchis to go away, that their duty had finished and they should go away. . . . The two militaries confronted each other. One said, it is our duty, while the other said, your duty is over, you should go away . . . the wells had medicine and poison in them, there were dead people in there, there was no water to drink, we were hungry and thirsty . . . nothing to eat, nothing to drink. Then our military brought two trucks to Narowar and they were filled with atta. They spread a tarpaulin and handed out atta to people, saying take as much as you want. They gave us corn, they kept giving it to us saying eat, destroy their fields. The Madras military really helped us. Everyone was grief stricken. Someone's mother had died, someone's father had gone, someone's daughter had been abducted . . . then we moved on. You know you feel some fear of a dead body, but at the time, we had no fear at all. . . . From there we came to the bridge on the Ravi. There they told us, this is the limit of our duty, we are now going back to help the kafila that has come from Daska. We saw a trainload of Hindus had been killed and in Dera Baba Nanak, a trainload of Musalmaans who had come from the direction of Ludhiana had been killed . . . they killed each other's people. We saw bodies of Musalmaans, utensils lying in the mud, clothes[,] . . . some people buried under others, and disease and illness all around. When we got to Dera Baba Nanak they said to us, you have come home. But we thought, our home was over there. We have left it behind. How can this be home?"

[From Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*
(Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 78–83.]

FROM 5. "HONOUR"

"My name is Basant Kaur. My husband's name was Sant Raja Singh. We came away from our houses on March 12, and on the 13th we stayed out, in the village. At first, we tried to show our strength, and then we realized that this would not work, so we joined the morcha [procession] to go away. We left our home in Thoa Khalsa on the 12th. For three or four days we were trapped inside our houses, we couldn't get out, though we used to move across the roofs of houses and that way we could get out a bit. One of our people had a gun, we used that, and two or three of their people died. I lost a brother-in-law. He died from a bullet they fired. It hit him and he died. So we kept the gun handy. Then there were fires all around, raging fires, and we were no match for them. I had a jeth, my older brother-in-law, he had a son, he kept asking give me afim [opium], mix it in water and I will take it. My jeth killed his mother, his sister, his wife, his daughter, and his uncle. My daughter was also killed. We went into the morcha inside the village, we all left our houses and collected together in the centre of the village, inside the sardaran di haveli, where there was also a well. It was Lajjawanti's house. The sardar, her husband, had died some time ago but his wife and other women of the house were there. Some children also. They all came

out. Then we all talked and said we don't want to become Musalmaan, we would rather die. So everyone was given a bit of afim, they were told, you keep this with you . . . I went upstairs, and when I came down there was my husband, my jeth's son, my jethani, her daughters, my jeth, my grandsons, three granddaughters. They were all killed so that they would not fall into the hands of Musalmaans. One girl from our village, she had gone off with the Musalmaans. She was quite beautiful, and everyone got worried that if one has gone, they will take all our girls away . . . so it was then that they decided to kill the girls. My jeth, his name is Harbans Singh, he killed his wife, his daughter, his son . . . he was small, only eight days old. Then my sister-in-law was killed, her son and her daughter, and then on the 14th of March we came to Jhelum. The vehicles came and took us, and we stayed there for about a month and then we came to Delhi.

"In Delhi there were four of my brothers, they read about this—the camp—in the papers and they came and found us. Then, gradually, over a period of time the children grew up and became older and things sorted themselves out. My parents were from Thamali. Hardly anyone survived from there. You know that family of Gurmeet's, they had two sisters, the Musalmaans took them away. It's not clear whether they died or were taken away, but their bodies were never found . . . Someone died this way, someone that, someone died here and someone there, and no one got to know. My parents were burnt alive.

"That whole area was like jungle, it was village area. One of my brothers survived and came away, one sister. They too were helped by a Musalmaan, there were some good ones, and they helped them—he hid them away in his house—and then put them into the vehicles that came, the military ones. The vehicles went to Mator and other places. In Mator, Shah Nawaz made sure no harm came to them. People from Nara managed to get away, but on the way they were all killed. Then my brothers read the papers and got to know. My husband, he killed his daughter, his niece, his sister, and a grandson. He killed them with a kirpan. My jeth's son killed his mother, his wife, his daughter, and a grandson and granddaughter, all with a pistol. And then, my jeth, he doused himself with kerosene and jumped into a fire.

"Many girls were killed. Then Mata Lajjawanti, she had a well near her house, in a sort of garden. Then all of us jumped into that, some hundred . . . eighty-four . . . girls and boys. All of us. Even boys, not only children, but grown-up boys. I also went in, I took my two children, and then we jumped in—I had some jewellery on me, things in my ears, on my wrists, and I had fourteen rupees on me. I took all that and threw it into the well, and then I jumped in, but . . . it's like when you put rotis into a tandoor, and if it is too full, the ones near the top, they don't cook, they have to be taken out. So the well filled up, and we could not drown . . . the children survived. Later, Nehru went to see the well, and the English then closed it up, the well that was full of bodies. The pathans took out those people who were at the top of the well—those

who died, died, and those who were alive, they pulled out. Then they went away—and what was left of our village was saved, except for that one girl who went away.

“I was frightened. Of course, I was . . . we were also frightened that we would be taken away by the Musalmaans. In our village, already, in the well that was inside the village, girls had jumped in. In the middle of the night they had jumped in. This happened where the morcha was. The hundred . . . eighty-four women who jumped in they were just outside, some two-hundred yards away from Lajjawanti’s house. In the morcha, the crowd had collected in Lajjawanti’s house. She was some seventy, seventy-five years old. A tall, strapping woman. She did a lot of seva of [service to] all the women, she herself jumped into the well. Many people were killed in the morcha, and the Musalmaans climbed on top to kill others, and then many came and tried to kill people with guns, one of them put a gun to my jeth’s chest and . . . and we began to jump in. The others had died earlier, and we were in the morcha, the well was some distance away from Lajjawanti’s house, in a garden. There were two wells, one inside and one outside, in the garden. My nanan [sister-in-law] and her daughter, they were both lying there . . . close by there was a ladle, I mixed afim in it, and gave it to them, and she put it in her mouth . . . she died, and I think the village dogs must have eaten her. We had no time to perform any last rites. An hour or so later, the trucks came. . . .

“She did path [oral recitation of prayers], and said don’t throw me away, let me have this afim, she took god’s name and then she died. We had afim because my jeth’s son used to eat it, and he had it with him and he got more and gave it to everyone. My jeth’s son, his daughter-in-law and his daughter, they died in Jhelum later, when we were going to the Dinia camp, on March 15 or so. The camp was close to the Jhelum. Four days we fought, and we remained strong, then around the 12th we got into the morcha, on the 13th our people were killed . . . then the trucks came . . . and took us to Rawat. . . .

“They brought us there [to the well]. From there . . . you know there was no place . . . nothing to eat, some people were eating close by but where could I give the children anything from . . . I had barely a few paise . . . my elder son had a duvanni (two annas) with him, we thought we could use that . . . my brother’s children were also hungry . . . but then they said the duvanni was khoti, damaged, unusable . . . [weeping] such difficulties . . . nothing to eat . . . we had to fill their stomachs . . . today they would have been ranis . . . so many of them, jethanis, children . . . I was the youngest . . . now I sit at home and my children are out working and I keep telling them these stories . . . they are stories after all . . . and you tell them and tell them until you lose consciousness . . .”

The abduction and rape of women, the physical mutilation of their bodies, the tattooing of their sexual organs with symbols of the other religion—these acts had been universally condemned. But no mention was made of family violence

by anyone—neither the families, nor the State, nor indeed by historians. . . . Its scale was not small. Virtually every village had similar stories. Gurmeet Singh, a survivor from village Thamali . . . in the same district, described their flight:

“On the night of the 12th of March we left at 4 a.m. . . . Our own family, all the people, we collected them in the gurudwara and got some men to guard them. We gave them orders to kill all the young girls, and as for the gurudwara, to pour oil on it and set it on fire.

“We decided this among ourselves. We felt totally helpless—so many people had collected, we were completely surrounded. If you looked around, all you could see was a sea of people . . . After all, you get frightened . . . people collected together to comfort each other. But then we found we were helpless . . . we had no weapons, whatever little we had they had taken. Then they took a decision in the gurudwara that all the young girls and women . . . two or three persons were assigned the task of finishing them off. Those in the gurudwara were asked to set it on fire with those inside . . . we killed all the young girls with our own hands; kerosene was poured over them inside the gurudwara and the place was set on fire . . . women and children, where could they go?”

Over the years, as I spoke to . . . more people, both men and women, I was to come across this response again. The tone adopted . . . was similar to that adopted by families when they spoke of the hundreds of women they had “martyred” in order to “save” the purity of the religion. . . .

Some negotiations had clearly taken place between the attackers and the victims in most of the villages. Kulwant Singh, another survivor, this time from Thamali, remembers a meeting at which an understanding was reached (between the two communities) that “we would be let off.” According to Kulwant Singh, the amount negotiated was between sixteen and thirty thousand rupees and the laying down of all weapons. Having done this, “at night they started fires and some of our sisters, daughters and others, in order to save their honour, their relatives, our veers [heroes], they martyred them and in this way . . . some of our women and children were killed. In the gurudwara there were piles of bodies.” There is no record of the numbers of women and children who were killed by the men of their own families, their own communities. Unlike in the case of abducted women, here families did not report the deaths of their women, for they themselves were responsible for them. But while abducted women then entered the realm of silence, women who were killed by families, or who took their own lives, entered the realm of martyrdom.

[From U. Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, 157–165.]



Chapter 8

ISSUES IN POST-INDEPENDENCE INDIA

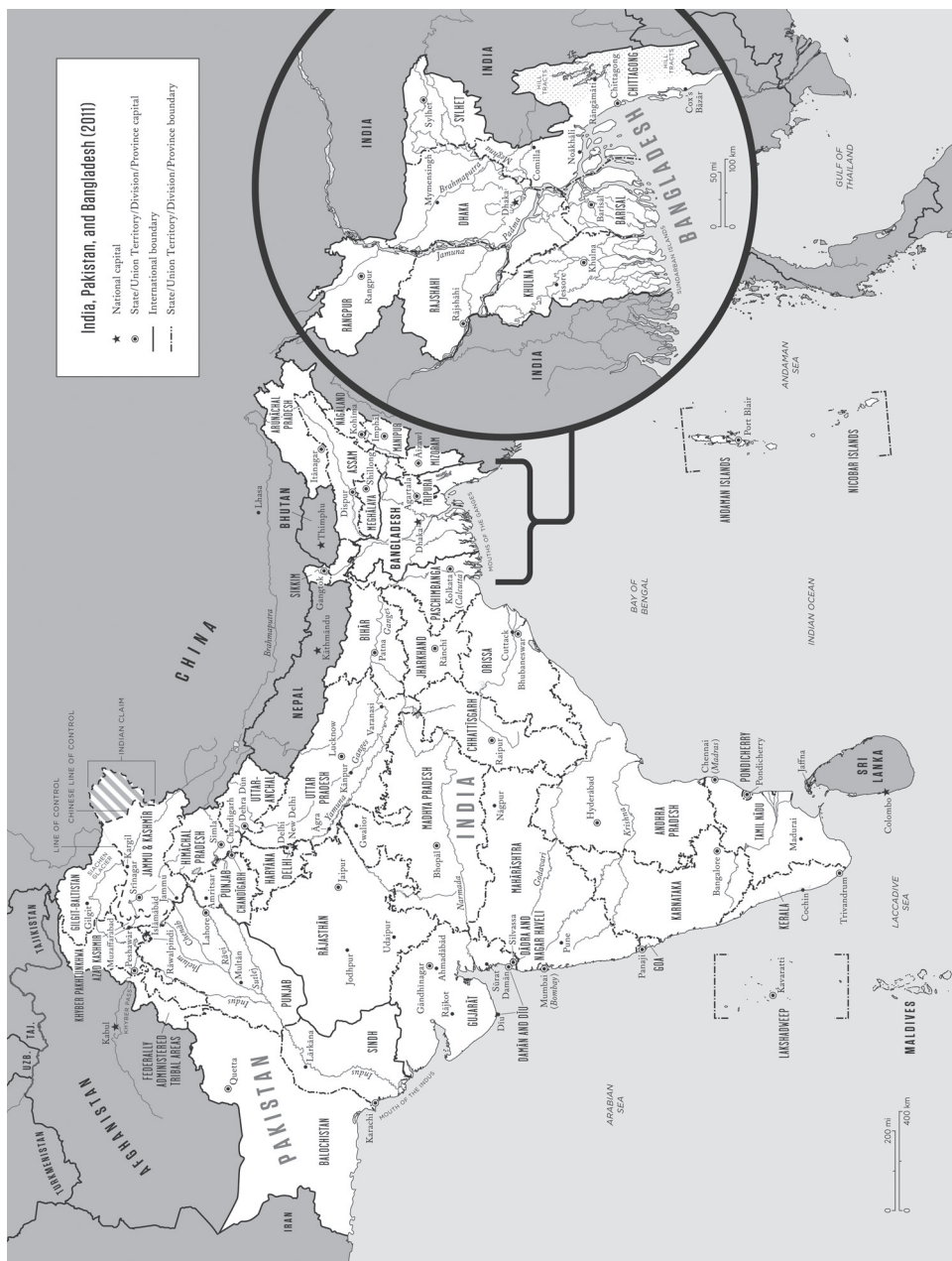
This chapter will consider some of the main issues that occupied a prominent place in Indian national life after India became an independent nation in 1947, an anniversary that in 2007 was celebrated by remembering the hopes that had not been fulfilled, as well as the many striking accomplishments.

These six decades comprised a period of lively intellectual debate over policies to be followed by the governments at both the central and the state levels. But it was also a time of fierce internal dissensions that sometimes led to civil disturbances, including those often referred to in India as “communal riots,” identified in terms of religious sectarianism, as in Gujarat in 2002. There were also attacks by political groups, like the “Naxalites,” who believed that social change could be achieved only through violence. In addition, there were insurgencies based on demands for self-determination in Kashmir, Punjab, and Northeast India. These same years also witnessed immense social changes, including a raised standard of living for many millions of people, controversial attempts to remove age-old discriminatory practices, improvements in the social status of women and children, increased literacy, a greatly improved and expanded system of higher education, rapid industrialization, a coherent foreign policy, attention paid to the status of Muslims, and the preservation of democracy, with freedom of speech and religion in a more-or-less stable political society.

Cutting across all these issues, however, was a concern for national unity, which is the characteristic motif of Indian political and social discourse after 1947. The reasons for this are suggested by the title chosen for these two volumes: "The Sources of Indian Traditions." The plural usage emphasizes the diversity, the complexity, and the very ancient and historical legacies that the people of India confronted on August 15, 1947. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of the new India, recognized the legacies of the past and the realities of the present as he envisioned the future in a memorable speech, on the eve of Independence. "A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history," he reminded his people, "when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance."¹

But finding the voice of India was not easy, as many of the great figures of modern India had recognized before Independence. Rabindranath Tagore (see chapter 5), most famous of India's modern poets, lamented in the last year of his life (1941) that sometimes he had ventured near the homes of the peasant, the fisherman, and the weaver, but had lacked the courage to go in, for he knew his poetry had not entered the songless land of "those who live near us and yet remain unknown."² When as a young man Jawaharlal Nehru came face-to-face with village India, and saw what he regarded as its appalling poverty, religious superstition, and the crushing burden of British rule, he asked himself: What is this India? How does she fit into the modern world? Why has she fallen so far behind the rest of the world, even China? Is there some hidden well of strength in the people that could be used to revitalize India?³ To a very great extent, the years since the coming of Independence have been a search for the authentic voices of India. What the two volumes of *The Sources of Indian Traditions* make plain is that there is no one voice of India. Rather, there are many voices, all seeking in a multitude of ways, as Nehru put it, to "to build the noble mansion of free India where all her children may dwell."⁴

We have called this chapter "Issues in Post-Independence India," and we have organized it into sections, most of them illustrating and addressing the major issues derived from the definition of India given in the Preamble to the Indian Constitution, as "a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic," assuring the "unity and integrity" of the nation. The words "socialist" and "secular" were not in the original Preamble but were added in an amendment to the Constitution in 1976, and the words "unity and integrity of the nation" were substituted for "unity of the nation." These added words, it was argued in the debates in Parliament in 1976, fairly represented the intentions of the drafters of the original Constitution. The importance of the issues that confronted India in the first sixty years has been determined from the treatment they received in the various legislative bodies, the printed media (including books, the popular press, academic and professional journals), television, radio, and the Internet, means of communication that were absent throughout much of the long historical sweep covered in our survey of Indian traditions.



India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh in 2011

Since 1947 a vibrant civil society has continued to develop, with groups and institutions responding to the needs, wishes, and opinions of the people. Many such groups and institutions made their voices heard, sometimes clamorously, initiating social change, and providing sources of stability while challenging the power of government. Because India had become so deeply involved during the nineteenth century with Western political and social life, many of these institutions have direct links with the Western world, but they are deeply embedded in the indigenous social structures of the South Asian subcontinent.

GIVING BIRTH TO THE NATION

The first of the sections in this chapter comprises two selections that embody the vision of India as the nation was first brought into being.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE: INDIA'S NATIONAL ANTHEM

India's national anthem, "Jana Gana Mana," is the first verse of a poem of five stanzas written in Bengali in 1912 by Rabindranath Tagore, who is also the author of Bangladesh's national anthem. The words of the anthem are an appropriate starting point for a consideration of the great issues of contemporary India. Unlike many national anthems, India's includes no hint of military glory, but rather emphasizes the blessings that have come to India through a spirituality that is not identified with any particular religion. Indeed, in 1912, indignant at the request that he contribute a song honoring King George V on his visit to India for his coronation as the country's "King-Emperor," Tagore composed this hymn in praise of God, as India's real Lord. The anthem expresses the unity of India through the naming of its different territorial regions, its mountains, and its rivers. The anthem was adopted by the Constituent Assembly of India on January 24, 1950.

Supreme Leader of the minds of all people, glory to thee,
 Ruler of India's destiny!
 Punjab, Sind, Gujarat, Maratha, Dravida, Utkal, Bengal,
 The Vindhya, Himalayas, Jamuna, and Ganga,
 The waves of the swelling ocean,
 All awaken sounding thy auspicious name,
 Praying for thy fruitful blessing,
 And singing of thy glory.
 Giver of the people's good fortune, glory to thee,
 Ruler of India's destiny!

Glory to thee, glory to thee, glory to thee,
Glory, glory, glory, glory to thee.

[Trans. Stephen Hay and Sanjit K. Mitra in
Sources of Indian Tradition, 2nd ed., ed. Stephen Hay
(New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 279–280.]

*PRIME MINISTER NEHRU:
INDIA'S "TRYST WITH DESTINY"*

As India became independent at midnight on August 14, 1947, Nehru made a moving speech to the members of the Constituent Assembly, calling upon them and the nation to remember the past as they pledged themselves to work for the future of India.

Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance. It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger service of humanity.

At the dawn of history India started on her unending quest, and trackless centuries are filled with striving and the grandeur of her success and her failures. Through good and ill fortune she has never lost sight of that quest or forgotten the ideals which gave her strength. We end today a period of ill fortune and India discovers herself again. The achievement we celebrate today is but a step, an opening of opportunity, to the greater triumphs and achievements that await us. Are we brave enough and wise enough to grasp this opportunity and accept the challenge of the future?

Freedom and power bring responsibility. That responsibility rests upon this Assembly, a sovereign body representing the sovereign people of India. Before the birth of freedom we have endured all the pains of labour and our hearts are heavy with the memory of this sorrow. Some of those pains continue even now. Nevertheless, the past is over and it is the future that beckons us even now.

That future is not one of ease and resting but of incessant striving so that we may fulfil the pledges we have so often taken and the one which we shall take today. The service of India means the service of the millions who suffer. It means the ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity. The ambition of the greatest man of our generation has been to wipe every tear from every eye. That may be beyond us, but as long as there are tears and suffering, so long our work will not be over.

And so we have to labour and to work, and work hard, to give reality to our dreams. Those dreams are for India, but they are also for the world, for all the nations and peoples are too closely knit together today for any one of them to imagine that they can live apart. Peace has been said to be indivisible; so is freedom, and so is prosperity now, and so also is disaster in this One World that can no longer be split into isolated fragments.

To the people of India, whose representatives we are, we make an appeal to join us with faith and confidence in this great adventure. This is no time for petty and destructive criticism, no time for ill-will or blaming others. We have to build the noble mansion of free India where all her children may dwell.

I beg to move, Sir,

“That it be resolved that:

(1) After the last stroke of midnight, all members of the Constituent Assembly present on this occasion, do take the following pledge: ‘At this solemn moment when the people of India through suffering and sacrifice, have secured freedom, I, ..., a member of the Constituent Assembly of India, do dedicate myself in all humility to the service of India and her people to the end that this ancient land attain her rightful place in the world and make her full and willing contribution to the promotion of world peace and the welfare of mankind’;

(2) Members who are not present on this occasion do take the pledge (with such verbal changes as the President may prescribe) at the time they next attend a session of the Assembly.”

[From Jawaharlal Nehru, *Independence and After, 1946–1949*
(Delhi: Publications Division, Government of India, 1949), 3–4.]

CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, 1947–1950

The Constitution of India was the product of the Constituent Assembly, the body created in 1946 not by direct elections, but by the provincial legislatures. A separate Constituent Assembly was created in Karachi for the new nation of Pakistan. These were, in effect, the legislatures of the two new Dominions, India and Pakistan, to which the British Parliament through the Indian Independence Act of July 18, 1947, transferred power.

As the Constituent Assembly turned to the work of writing a Constitution, it was essentially controlled by one party, the Indian National Congress, but the members of the Congress represented views ranging from radical socialism to reactionary capitalism, from a Gandhian emphasis on anti-industrialism to wholehearted acceptance of industrialization, and from a belief that India should free herself from the burden of religion to a conviction that India should declare itself a Hindu country. That the Assembly produced within two years a complex but enduring constitution is due to the strong leadership of such able Congress leaders as Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad, Rajendra Prasad, and oth-

ers mentioned in the previous chapters, as well as many gifted lawyers, like Sir B. N. Rau, whose knowledge of constitutional law shaped the final document.

DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR, LAW MINISTER

On August 29, 1947, the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly began its work, with Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (see chapter 6), who had been appointed Law Minister in Nehru's first Cabinet on August 3, as its chairman. His appointment signaled Nehru's intention to draw all sections of society into the shaping of the new India. Although Ambedkar had dropped his earlier demands for separate electorates for the Untouchables, the Constitution committed India to the abolition of Untouchability and granted a wide range of benefits for depressed minorities. However, Ambedkar later became dissatisfied with Nehru's failure to support social legislation for women as well as Untouchables. His dramatic acceptance of Buddhism on October 14, 1956, in Nagpur, for himself and his people, was an act of criticism of Hindu society. In the following years, over four million Indians, chiefly from the Scheduled Castes, declared themselves Buddhists. Ambedkar also established the framework for a new political party, the Republican Party, which, like the Buddhist movement, was intended to serve not only the Scheduled Castes but all the dispossessed of India. He died in 1956, but his passionate support for India's oppressed classes led to new political influence for the depressed classes in later years, which was demonstrated by the role they played in the electoral process.

DEFENDING THE NATION

On November 4, 1948, Ambedkar, as chairman of the Drafting Committee, moved that the first draft of the Constitution be considered by the Constituent Assembly. His thoughtful speeches are among the very best made in the Assembly, and well repay careful study.

A criticism against the Draft Constitution is that no part of it represents the ancient polity of India. It is said that the new Constitution should have been drafted on the ancient Hindu model of a State and that instead of incorporating Western theories the new Constitution should have been raised and built upon village panchayats and District Panchayats. There are others who have taken a more extreme view. They do not want any Central or Provincial Governments. They just want India to contain so many village Governments. The love of the intellectual Indians for the village community is of course infinite if not pathetic (*laughter*). . . . But those who take pride in the village communities do not care to consider what little part they have played in the affairs and the destiny of the country; and why. . . .

What pride can one feel in them? That they have survived through all vicissitudes may be a fact. But mere survival has no value. The question is on what

plane they have survived. Surely on a low, on a selfish level. I hold that these village republics have been the ruination of India. . . . I am therefore surprised that those who condemn provincialism and communalism should come forward as champions of the village. What is the village but a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow-mindedness and communalism? I am glad that the Draft Constitution has discarded the village and adopted the individual as its unit.

The Draft Constitution is also criticised because of the safeguards it provides for minorities. In this, the Drafting Committee has no responsibility. It follows the decisions of the Constituent Assembly. Speaking for myself, I have no doubt that the Constituent Assembly has done wisely in providing such safeguards for minorities as it has done. In this country both the minorities and the majorities have followed a wrong path. It is wrong for the majority to deny the existence of minorities. It is equally wrong for the minorities to perpetuate themselves. A solution must be found which will serve a double purpose. It must recognize the existence of the minorities to start with. It must also be such that it will enable majorities and minorities to merge someday into one. The solution proposed by the Constituent Assembly is to be welcomed because it is a solution which serves this twofold purpose. To diehards who have developed a kind of fanaticism against minority protection I would like to say two things. One is that minorities are an explosive force which, if it erupts, can blow up the whole fabric of the State. The history of Europe bears ample and appalling testimony to this fact. The other is that the minorities in India have agreed to place their existence in the hands of the majority. . . . They have loyally accepted the rule of the majority which is basically a communal majority and not a political majority. It is for the majority to realize its duty is not to discriminate against minorities.

[From *Constituent Assembly Debates, Official Reports*
(New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, n.d.), 7:38–39.]

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE IN LIGHT OF THE PAST

At the third and final reading of the bill to enact the new Constitution into law (in November 1949), Ambedkar warned the Constituent Assembly of the dangers threatening India's independence and democratic Constitution. As remedies, he advised devotion to the country, an end to civil disobedience, avoidance of hero-worship, the fostering of social and economic equality, and adherence to constitutional methods of self-government. Ambedkar's fear that the Indian union might disintegrate was often expressed at the time, by both Indians and foreigners.

On 26th January 1950, India will be an independent country (*Cheers*). What would happen to her independence? Will she maintain her independence or will she lose it again? This is the first thought that comes to my mind. It is not that India was never an independent country. The point is that she once lost the

independence she had. Will she lose it a second time? It is this thought which makes me most anxious for the future. . . .

Will history repeat itself? It is this thought which fills me with anxiety. This anxiety is deepened by the realization of the fact that in addition to our old enemies in the form of castes and creeds we are going to have many political parties with diverse and opposing political creeds. Will Indians place the country above their creed or will they place creed above country? I do not know. But this much is certain that if the parties place creed above country, our independence will be put in jeopardy a second time and probably be lost for ever. . . .

We must begin by acknowledging the fact that there is complete absence of two things in Indian Society. One of these is equality. On the social plane, we have in India a society based on the principle of graded inequality which means elevation for some and degradation for others. On the economic plane, we have a society in which there are some who have immense wealth as against many who live in abject poverty. On the 26th of January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one man one vote and one vote one value. In our social and economic life, we shall, by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one value. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this Assembly has so laboriously built up.

The second thing we are wanting in is recognition of the principle of fraternity. What does fraternity mean? Fraternity means a sense of common brotherhood of all Indians—of Indians being one people. It is the principle which gives unity and solidarity to social life. It is a difficult thing to achieve. . . .

I am of opinion that in believing that we are a nation, we are cherishing a great delusion. How can people divided into several thousands of castes be a nation? The sooner we realize that we are not as yet a nation in the social and psychological sense of the word, the better for us. For then only we shall realize the necessity of becoming a nation and seriously think of ways and means of realizing the goal. . . . The castes are anti-national. In the first place because they bring about separation in social life. They are anti-national also because they generate jealousy and antipathy between caste and caste. . . .

I do not wish to weary the House any further. Independence is no doubt a matter of joy. But let us not forget that this independence has thrown on us great responsibilities. By independence, we have lost the excuse of blaming the British for anything going wrong. If hereafter things go wrong, we will have nobody to blame except ourselves.

[From *Constituent Assembly Debates*, 11:977–981.]

THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

The Constitution makers drew upon three principal sources. The first was the Government of India Act of 1935, which, while keeping final power in British hands, had established the structures of administration and provided for a system of elections to the provincial and central legislatures. The acceptance of this framework meant the continuance of many of the laws, regulations, and practices that had been established during British rule. A second source encompassed the constitutions of other countries where federal systems had been established, especially the United States, Canada, and Australia. The third source comprised the documents produced by the Indian National Congress through the years that emphasized justice, economic and social equality, and freedom of speech and religion. The Constitution is not a revolutionary document, but a notable feature is the inclusion of a long section on fundamental rights that essentially describes the hopes and aspirations of the Indian people. India's is the longest constitution in the world, and only representative selections are given here—ones that concern significant issues in contemporary India.

Indeed, two sections of the Constitution aroused a great deal of controversy, both in the Constituent Assembly and among the public. One was Article 25, making freedom of religion an inalienable right. While freedom to practice religion was accepted, there was serious objection to the right to propagate religion. Muslims and Christians insisted that the propagation of their faith was a fundamental tenet of their religion. This remains a much-disputed right in India. The other, even more hotly debated issue was the choice of Hindi as the national language in Article 343 (1). To many it seemed absurd that English should continue to retain a privileged place in government when it was spoken by only a very small minority and was the language of India's oppressors. The issue also aroused religious passions: many felt that Hindi was peculiarly the language of Hindus and that Urdu, widely spoken in North India, but especially by Muslims, was being discriminated against. Even stronger was the feeling that some regional languages, such as Tamil and Bengali, were far more developed as literary languages; others argued that English was a useful link language among all sections of the country and that it was a world language. Both the religion and the language issues are touched upon in a number of later selections in this chapter.

It is important to remember that the "Fundamental Rights" of the Constitution are justiciable—that is, individuals or groups can go to court to have them enforced—but the "Directive Principles" are not. They are aims to be attained by a good society. During the "Emergency" in 1976–1977, when many freedoms were restricted, the Forty-Fourth Amendment was passed; it included a section on the "Fundamental Duties" of citizens. These are aspirations to make people better citizens, and, at the same time, to increase the control of government; like the Directive Principles, however, they cannot be enforced in the courts.

The Constitution was unanimously adopted by the Assembly on November 26, 1949, and it has been of immense importance in shaping the character and nature of the nation. India officially became the republic of India on January 26, 1950.

The numbered paragraphs are as in the original document.

THE PREAMBLE (AS AMENDED IN 1976)

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens:

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;
LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;
EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all
FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation;

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.

PART I (1). INDIA, THAT IS BHARAT,
SHALL BE A UNION OF STATES. . . .

PART III: FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS . . .

Right to Equality

14 . . . The State [the Government of India] shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.

15 . . . (I) The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, sex, place of birth, or any of them. . . .

16 . . . There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State. . . .

17 . . . “Untouchability” is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. . . .

Right to Freedom

19 . . . (I) All citizens shall have the right—

(a) to freedom of speech and expression . . . [except that] reasonable restrictions on the exercise of the right conferred. . . . [may be imposed by the State] in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence; (b) to assemble peaceably and without arms; (c) to form associations or unions; (d) to move freely throughout the territory of India; (e) to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India; (f) to acquire, hold and dispose of property; and (g) to practice any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business. . . .

Right to Freedom of Religion

25 . . . All citizens shall have the right to freedom of religion

(1) Subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this Part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion. (2) Nothing in this article shall affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the State from making any law—(a) regulating or restricting any economic, financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice; (b) providing for social welfare and reform or the throwing open of Hindu religious institutions of a public character to all classes and sections of Hindus.

Explanation I.—The wearing and carrying of *kirpans* shall be deemed to be included in the profession of the Sikh religion. *Explanation II.*—In sub-clause (b) of clause (2), the reference to Hindus shall be construed as including a reference to persons professing the Sikh, Jaina or Buddhist religion, and the reference to Hindu religious institutions shall be construed accordingly.

26 . . . Subject to public order, morality and health, every religious denomination or any section thereof shall have the right—(a) to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes; (b) to manage its own affairs in matters of religion; (c) to own and acquire movable and immovable property; and (d) to administer such property in accordance with law.

27 . . . No person shall be compelled to pay any taxes, the proceeds of which are specifically appropriated in payment of expenses for the promotion or maintenance of any particular religion or religious denomination.

28 . . . (1) No religious instruction shall be provided in any educational institution wholly maintained out of State funds. (2) Nothing in clause (1) shall apply to an educational institution which is administered by the State but has been established under any endowment or trust which requires that religious instruction shall be imparted in such institution. (3) No person attending any educational institution recognised by the State or receiving aid out of State funds shall be required to take part in any religious instruction that may be imparted in such institution or to attend any religious worship that may be conducted in such institution or in any premises attached thereto unless such person or, if such person is a minor, his guardian has given his consent thereto.

Cultural and Educational Rights

29 . . . (1) Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same. . . .

30 . . . All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. . . .

PART IV: DIRECTIVE PRINCIPLES OF STATE POLICY. . . .

38 . . . The State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of the national life.

39 . . . The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing—

(a) that the citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood; (b) that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good; (c) that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment; (d) that there is equal pay for equal work for both men and women; (e) that the health and strength of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength; (f) that children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment. . . .

44 . . . The State shall endeavor to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India. . . .

PART IV A: FUNDAMENTAL DUTIES (AMENDMENT OF 1976)

51 A . . . It shall be the duty of every citizen of India—

(a) to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem; (b) to cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom; (c) to uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India; (d) to defend the country and render national service when called upon to do so; (e) to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectarian diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women; (f) to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture; (g) to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wild life, and to have compassion for living creatures; (h) to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform; (i) to safeguard public property and to abjure violence; (j) to strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement. . . .

PART XVII: OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

343 (1) . . . The official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script. The form of numerals to be used for the official purposes of the Union

shall be the international form of Indian numerals. (2) Notwithstanding anything in clause (1), for a period of fifteen years from the commencement of this Constitution, the English language shall continue to be used for all the official purposes of the Union for which it was being used immediately before such commencement: Provided that the President may, during the said period, by order authorise the use of the Hindi language in addition to the English language and of the Devanagari form of numerals in addition to the international form of Indian numerals for any of the official purposes of the Union. (3) Notwithstanding anything in this article, Parliament may by law provide for the use, after the said period of fifteen years, of—(a) the English language, or (b) the Devanagari form of numerals, for such purposes as may be specified in the law.

[From *The Constitution of India (As modified up to the 1st February, 1977)*
(New Delhi: Government of India Press, 1977), 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 11–12, 19, 20, 22, 143.]

THE UNITY AND INTEGRITY OF THE NATION

As one part of the process of the transfer of power to the new independent nations of India and Pakistan, the question of the fate of the princely states was vital to the unity of each. Of the more than five hundred princely states, many were small, but a few were large and in strategic locations. Since most were within the borders of India, the deputy prime minister, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and his assistant V. P. Menon, an able civil servant now installed as secretary of the Ministry of States, devoted themselves to this task. They were assisted by Viceroy Lord Louis Mountbatten, who remained in India as governor-general until 1948. While Mountbatten lectured the princes on the virtues of accession and the dangers of delay, Patel and Menon worked on the practical steps, details, and problems involved. In the end, almost all of the princely states acceded to India, a few acceded to Pakistan, and a small number—notably Kashmir and Hyderabad—stalled. Eventually the Indian army moved into Hyderabad in 1948, claiming that order must be kept and the citizens protected.

The maharaja of Kashmir dithered over what to do. But when irregulars, thought to be inspired and helped by the government of Pakistan, invaded Kashmir from the Pakistan side of the frontier, he called for Indian help and acceded to India. However, these “facts” and the whole process involving Kashmir have long been disputed, as is evident from the documents about Kashmir in this and the following chapter.

V. P. MENON AND THE INTEGRATION OF THE INDIAN STATES

Vapal Pangunni Menon (1894–1966), widely known as V. P. Menon, son of a Kerala schoolmaster, entered the service of the British Raj in 1917 and rose through the ranks

to become constitutional adviser to the governor-general and political reforms commissioner in 1946. Close to the Congress leaders, but still trusted by Mountbatten, Menon helped to formulate the plans for the partition of India in the spring of 1947. When one plan was rejected by Jawaharlal Nehru on behalf of the Congress, Menon drew up an alternative plan, which was eventually accepted by the British government and all Indian parties involved. At the behest of Patel, he later wrote two volumes, the first on the steps to Partition and the second on the integration of the states. Both provide a clear, detailed, and informed narrative from the Congress side, but are not uncritical of the Congress as well as of all others involved.

Here are selections from the conclusion to V. P. Menon's second book.

When the British Government decided to transfer power to India, they no doubt found it the best solution of a difficult problem to declare that the paramountcy which they exercised over the Indian States would automatically lapse. The rulers generally welcomed this decision; and, after all, the parties directly concerned were the British Government and the rulers. Thus had the edifice, which the British themselves built up laboriously for more than 150 years, been demolished overnight! . . . In India there were very few who realized the magnitude of the threatened danger of balkanization.

It was easy enough for the British Parliament to declare the lapse of paramountcy, but could such a declaration wipe out the fundamentals on which paramountcy rested? With the departure of the British, the Government of India did not cease to be the supreme power in India. Essential defense and security requirements of the country and geographical and economic compulsions had not ceased to be operative; nor had the obligations of the Government of India to protect their territories against external aggression and to preserve peace and order throughout the country become any the less. Why else had the British Government themselves asserted time and again in their relations with the Indian States that their supremacy was not based only upon treaties and engagements, but existed independently of them?

At the same time, there is no doubt that had paramountcy been transferred to a free India with all the obligations which had been assumed by the British Government under the various treaties, engagements and sanads, it would scarcely have been possible for us to have solved the problem of the Indian States in the way we did. By the lapse of paramountcy we were able to write on a clean slate unhampered by any obligations.

The weakest link in the princely chain was the existence of a large number of small States. Their rulers were naturally apprehensive about their future. The rulers of the bigger States, on the other hand, welcomed the lapse of paramountcy in the hope that they would be able to preserve their territorial integrity and have enough bargaining power to force a satisfactory relationship with the Centre. What they failed to realize at the time was that the new Government of India could not possibly uphold the idea of autocracy in the States and

that for their very existence the rulers had to have either the support of their people, or the protection of the Government of India. The former the rulers generally lacked; the latter had automatically terminated with the lapse of paramountcy.

Our first task to prevent the balkanization of the country and to stop any possible inveiglement of the States by Pakistan was to bring the States into some form of organic relationship with the Centre. This we did by means of the expedient of accession on three subjects, as well as a Standstill Agreement which kept alive the relations subsisting at the time between the States and the Government of India. The rulers were at first suspicious of this move; but most of them realized that, with the partition of the country, if they did not give their full support to the Government of India there was real danger that the country would be submerged in one big deluge. The rulers of the bigger States could have stood out and could have given us as much trouble, if not more, than Hyderabad or Junagadh. They certainly had their armies intact and their forces could—in some States at any rate—stand comparison in point of organization, equipment and efficiency with the Indian Army. It was indeed highly selfless and patriotic on the part of these rulers to have placed the wider interests of the country above their own. Some of them even went to the extent of lending us all their troops at a critical period regardless of their own internal security.

Gradually the realization dawned on them that after the advent of independence they would have no choice but to grant responsible government to their people, which meant that their own future would be governed by the whims of their ministries; but that, if they agreed to integration, their interests would be better safeguarded by the Government of India. Besides, they would be earning the goodwill of the country. . . .

The advocates of viable States could not have studied the geographical aspect of the problem. Even they conceded that the smaller States had to go. There were two courses open: to merge the small States in the provinces in which they were situated or to which they were contiguous; and, in cases where this was not possible, to merge them with the nearest large State. In the latter event, would we be justified in perpetuating the entity of the bigger State? This was exactly the problem which confronted us in Central India and Malwa where a number of small States were embedded between the bigger States of Gwalior and Indore. Once we had integrated Gwalior, which was one of the five premier States in India, could we leave lesser viable States alone? Further, the viability of a State must have some relation to its revenue. There were only nineteen States which had a revenue of Rs 1 crore and above and seven had a revenue from Rs 50 lakhs to Rs 1 crore. Rewa State, for instance, with a revenue of nearly Rs 115 lakhs had been declared as viable. But after surrendering a fair size of its revenue to the Centre for the administration of defense, external affairs and communications, could it provide adequate modern amenities and perform the functions of a Welfare State? . . .

Another criticism, which is being levelled nearly four years after the inauguration of the new Constitution, is against the quantum of the privy purses fixed for the rulers. In the chapter on "The Cost of Integration," I have indicated that, apart from other advantages, viewed solely against the assets we have received from the States, the total annual expenditure on privy purses is insignificant. . . .

The merger agreements and covenants are bilateral documents. As Sardar very rightly remarked, the rulers discharged their part of the contract by surrendering their States and powers. They are now bereft of any bargaining power. Because a creditor is too weak or poor to enforce his rights, a debtor should not, in honour, refuse to discharge his debt. As an honourable party to an agreement, we cannot take the stand that we shall accept only that part of the settlement which confers rights on us, and repudiate or whittle down that part which defines our obligations. As a nation aspiring to give a moral lead to the world, let it not be said of us that we know the "price of everything and the value of nothing."

After integration, the rulers settled down and adjusted themselves to the new order of things. . . .

In August 1947, when the transfer of power took place, very few could have conceived as possible the revolutionary change that was to come over the States within such a short time. Speaking in September 1948, Nehru confessed:

Even I who have been rather intimately connected with the States People's movement for many years, if I had been asked six months ago what the course of developments would be in the next six months since then, I would have hesitated to say that such rapid changes would take place. . . . The historian who looks back will no doubt consider this integration of the States into India as one of the dominant phases of India's history.

By the time the Constitution came into force on 26 January 1950, we had integrated geographically all the States and brought them into the same constitutional relations with the Centre as the provinces. The administrative integration in the Unions was proceeding apace. The scheme of financial integration was already worked out and finalized and it was to come into operation within a few months. The Indian States Forces were to be absorbed into the Indian Army.

By the partition India had lost an area of 364,737 square miles and a population of 81½ millions. By the integration of the States, we brought in an area of nearly 500,000 square miles with a population of 86½ millions (not including Jammu and Kashmir).

In the words of Sardar, "the great ideal of geographical, political, and economic unification of India, an ideal which for centuries remained a distant dream and which appeared as remote and as difficult of attainment as ever even

after the advent of Indian independence,” was consummated by the policy of integration. . . .

We had demolished the artificial barriers between the States inter se and the rest of India and had indeed laid the foundations for an integrated administrative and financial structure. But the real integration had to take place in the minds of the people. This could not be accomplished overnight. It would take some time for the people of the erstwhile States to outgrow their regional loyalties and to develop a wider outlook and broader vision. . . .

Contemporary opinion has already anticipated the verdict of history in regard to the integration of the States. To have dissolved 554 States by integrating them into the pattern of the Republic; to have brought about order out of the nightmare of chaos whence we started, and to have democratized the administration in all the erstwhile States, should steel us on to the attainment of equal success in other spheres. For the first time India has become an integrated whole in the real sense of the term, though this is but the foundation on which to build a prosperous Welfare State. An amorphous mass of aspirations has to be integrated. Life has to be made meaningful for the millions who have led a twilight existence.

[V. P. Menon, *The Story of the Integration of the Indian States*
(Bombay: Orient Longmans, 1961), 463–472.]

THE STATES REORGANIZATION COMMISSION

The federal structure of the Indian government that came into being in 1947 was based upon the political units that had been created by the British, partly as a result of patterns of conquest and partly for administrative convenience. There were, however, political groups that began to agitate for states based upon linguistic and cultural divisions. These movements could cite the high authority of Gandhi, who had argued, as early as 1920, for linguistic states as a rational reorganization of the political map, and had organized Congress Committees based on language. The pressure for reorganization became so strong that the government agreed to the creation of a number of new linguistic states in the 1950s, including Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh (for Telugu), and Maharashtra (for Marathi).

The issue received detailed consideration through the appointment of a high-level commission to study the issue and make recommendations. Its report showed how many complex issues were involved—a national language, jobs in government services, higher education, religious affiliations, and the dangers of arousing what came to be called a “subnationalism” that might destroy the unity and integrity of the nation.

846. We have now come to the end of our appointed task. The problem of reorganisation of States has aroused such passions and the claims which have been made are so many and so conflicting that the background against which

this whole problem has to be dealt with may quite often be obscured or even forgotten. In order that the recommendations which we have made may be viewed in proper perspective, we should like to emphasise two basic facts. Firstly, the States, whether they are reorganised or not, are and will continue to be integral parts of a Union which is far and away the more real political entity and the basis of our nationhood. Secondly, the Constitution of India recognises only one citizenship, a common citizenship for the entire Indian people, with equal rights and opportunities throughout the Union.

847. . . . If the implications of these important facts had been fully appreciated and generally accepted, the question of territorial redistribution would not have developed into a major national problem of disquieting proportions.

849. Unfortunately, the manner in which certain administrations have conducted their affairs has itself partly contributed to the growth of this parochial sentiment. We have referred earlier to the domicile rules which are in force in certain States, governing eligibility to State services. . . . This is bound to cause discontent among the other groups, apart from impeding the free flow of talent and impairing administrative efficiency.

850. We were greatly concerned to observe that in one State for instance, domicile rules were applied not only to determine eligibility for appointment to the public services but also to regulate the awards of contracts and rights in respect of fisheries, ferries, toll-bridges, forests and excise shops.

851. Such stipulations, in our opinion, are not only inconsistent with Articles 15, 16 and 19 of the Constitution but go against the very conception of an Indian citizenship. . . .

861. Guided by the consideration that the principal organs of State should be so constituted as to inspire confidence and to help in arresting parochial trends, we would also recommend that at least one-third of the number of Judges in a High Court should consist of persons who are recruited from outside that State. In making appointments to a High Court bench, professional standing and ability must obviously be the over-riding considerations. . . .

862. As we have already observed, the progressive adoption of Hindi for the official purposes of the Union should operate as a unifying factor. A common national language, however, to be a really integrating force should have a wider range. English, though a foreign language, has helped to bring the people of different regions in India closer to each other firstly because it has been the official language both at the central and at the provincial levels, and secondly because it has been the medium of instruction for higher education throughout the country. It has, therefore, provided a common vehicle for higher thought as well as for administrative activity and has helped to maintain common standards at the higher educational institutions.

865. A wide field of choice for higher education and migration from universities and other institutions for higher education has been possible in this country,

not only because English has so far been the medium of instruction in these institutions, but also because the standards of teaching and research have been, generally speaking, comparable. Some of these institutions are contemplating the adoption of the regional languages as the media of instruction. If English in any of these institutions is replaced prematurely, and if facilities are not provided for acquiring necessary proficiency in that language in the interests of higher research, standards of higher education are bound to suffer.

867. We fully realise the importance of the study of Hindi and the regional languages, but we feel that for the present the use of English in higher technical studies does not come into conflict with the growth of these languages.

871. India is now on the eve of vast economic and social changes. These changes must affect every institution and will call for a constant review of our traditional methods of thought and ways of life.

872. One of the important developments in recent times has, for example, been the country's conversion to the ideal of social, political and economic equality. We do not mean to minimise the difficulties in the way of realising this ideal of equality, to which the country is now committed. Nevertheless, it is a great advance that the comparatively backward sections of the community are now in the picture. An important source of tension within the body politic is, therefore, being progressively removed.

874. The consequences of economic planning to which the country is now committed are very great. When resources are mobilised and investment is undertaken at the national rather than at the regional or State level, the States will inevitably get more and more integrated in a joint endeavour for the economic advancement of the nation as a whole.

878. Free India is now on the move. What has already been achieved can be viewed with a measure of legitimate pride. The manner in which the very difficult problem of princely India was solved in the anxious and bewildering circumstances following the Partition will, by itself, be a standing testimony to the political wisdom and strength of the Indian people and their firm determination to eradicate artificial barriers and cramping loyalties.

879. We conclude in the hope that the scheme of reorganisation which we have proposed will be viewed against this background and that men of goodwill will co-operate with those charged with the onerous responsibility of reconciling competitive claims and of balancing regional sentiments with national interests in giving effect to the decisions which might be taken, in an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding.

S. FAZL ALI, *Chairman*, H. N. KUNZRU, *Member*. M. PANIKKAR, *Member*
P. C. CHAUDHURI, *Secretary*. NEW DELHI, *Dated 30th September, 1955.*

[*Report of the States Reorganization Commission* (New Delhi: Government of India, 1955), chapter IV, secs. 846, 847, 849, 850, 851, 861, 862, 865, 867, 871, 872, 874, 878, 879.]

***SELF-DETERMINATION AND SUCCESSION:
THREATS TO UNITY AND INTEGRITY***

The commitment to a unified, secular state has been strongly challenged by movements for secession and self-determination in three areas—Kashmir, Punjab, and the Northeast, especially Nagaland. These areas differ greatly from each other in their internal histories and in their relationships with the preceding political structures, the Mughal and the British empires. In all three areas, the uprisings can be understood as movements for self-determination motivated by ethnic affiliations, religious identities, political ambitions of local leaders, and economic grievances against the Indian government. Involvement with foreign governments has been an important factor, especially in Kashmir, as has been the role played by immigrant groups settled in Great Britain and North America for the case of Punjab. In Nagaland, however, there has been little outside involvement, and the insurgency has attracted much less attention, even in India. The situations in all three areas are challenges to India's commitments to democracy, secularism, and justice. The complexities of the insurgencies are not easily disentangled, but statements of attitudes and beliefs from participants in all three areas are presented below. Given the nature of the issues, all are necessarily partisan. What is missing from these selections are details of the enormity of the human suffering caused both by the insurgents and by the government's responses to them.

KASHMIR

The insurgency in the state of Jammu and Kashmir (often referred to simply as "Kashmir") is a direct result of the Partition of India in 1947 when, as noted in chapter 7, the rulers of the approximately five hundred quasi-independent princely states were given the right to join either India or Pakistan, but not to become independent. For Pakistan's versions of the events that followed, see chapter 9.

The Treaty of Amritsar

At the time of Partition, the ruler of the state, Maharaja Hari Singh, was a Hindu, but the majority of the people were Muslims. There was thus an expectation that he would join his state to Pakistan. He did not, however, and under some duress acceded to India in October 1947. How his family had become rulers of the state is one of the more sordid episodes in nineteenth-century imperialism. In 1846 the British had defeated the Sikh kingdom in the Punjab, which had seized territory to the north, including the Kashmir Valley. When the British took Punjab, they sold the Kashmir territory to Gulab Singh, the ruler of the state of Jammu, for a million pounds. In the

words of the treaty signed at Amritsar in 1846, given below, Kashmir was to belong forever to the male heirs of Gulab Singh. The famous Indian poet Muhammad Iqbal (see chapter 5), who was of Kashmiri descent, captured what many Kashmiris think when they recall this transaction:

Each hill, each garden, field. Each farmer, too, they sold,
A nation for a price, that makes my blood run cold.

The treaty between the British Government on the one part and Maharajah Gulab Singh of Jammu on the other concluded on the part of the British Government by Frederick Currie, Esq. and Brevet-Major Henry Montgomery Lawrence, acting under the orders of the Rt. Hon. Sir Henry Hardinge, G.C.B., one of her Britannic Majesty's most Honorable Privy Council, Governor-General of the possessions of the East India Company, to direct and control all the affairs in the East Indies and by Maharajah Gulab Singh in person—1846.

Article 1: The British Government transfers and makes over for ever in independent possession to Maharajah Gulab Singh and the heirs male of his body all the hilly or mountainous country with its dependencies situated to the eastward of the River Indus and the westward of the River Ravi including Chamba and excluding Lahol, being part of the territories ceded to the British Government by the Lahore State according to the provisions of Article IV of the *Treaty of Lahore*, dated 9th March, 1846. . . .

Article 3: In consideration of the transfer made to him and his heirs by the provisions of the foregoing article Maharajah Gulab Singh will pay to the British Government the sum of seventy-five lakhs of rupees . . . , fifty lakhs to be paid on or before the 1st October of the current year, A.D., 1846. . . .

Article 5: Maharajah Gulab Singh will refer to the arbitration of the British Government any disputes or question that may arise between himself and the Government of Lahore or any other neighboring State, and will abide by the decision of the British Government. . . .

Article 7: Maharajah Gulab Singh engages never to take to retain in his service any British subject nor the subject of any European or American State without the consent of the British Government. . . .

. . . : Maharajah Gulab Singh acknowledges the supremacy of the British Government and will in token of such supremacy present annually to the British Government one horse, twelve shawl goats of approved breed (six male and six female) and three pairs of Cashmere shawls.

[“Treaty of Amritsar, March 16, 1846,” in *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements, and Sanads, compiled by C. U. Aitchison*, 3rd rev. ed., 14 vols. (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1892–1893), 12:21–22.]

India's Appeal to the United Nations Security Council

On January 1, 1948, the government of India formally notified the Security Council of the United Nations that its territory, the state of Jammu and Kashmir, had been invaded by Pakistan. The state had become part of India, the letter pointed out, when its ruler, the maharaja, had acceded the state on October 26 to India, as he had a right to do under the arrangements that ended British rule in the subcontinent. India asked for action by the United Nations against Pakistan, claiming that Pakistan had invaded India and was illegally occupying its territory.

The Government of India have instructed me to transmit to you the following telegraphic communication:

1. Under Article 35 of the Charter of the United Nations, any Member may bring any situation whose continuance is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security to the attention of the Security Council. Such a situation now exists between India and Pakistan owing to the aid which invaders, consisting of invaders and of tribesmen from the territory immediately adjoining Pakistan in the north-west are drawing from Pakistan for operations against Jammu and Kashmir, a State which has acceded to the Dominion of India and is part of India. . . . The Government of India request the Security Council to call upon Pakistan to put an end immediately to the giving of such assistance, which is an act of aggression against India. If Pakistan does not do so, the Government of India may be compelled in self-defence, to enter Pakistan territory in order to take military action against the invaders. The matter is therefore of extreme urgency and calls for immediate action by the Security Council for a breach of international peace. . . .

Immediately after the raids into the Jammu and Kashmir state commenced, approaches were informally made to the Government of India for the acceptance of the accession of the State to the Indian Dominion. . . . On 26 October, the Ruler of the State, His Highness Maharaja Sir Hari Singh, appealed urgently to the Government of India for help. . . . An appeal for help was also simultaneously received by the Government of India from the largest popular organization in Kashmir, the National Conference headed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. . . .

The invaders are still on the soil of Jammu and Kashmir and the inhabitants are exposed to all the atrocities of which a barbarous foe is capable. . . . Indefinite continuance of the present operations prolongs the agony of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, is a drain on India's resources and a constant threat to the maintenance of peace between India and Pakistan. The Government of India have no option, therefore, but to take more effective military action in order to rid the Jammu and Kashmir state of the invader. . . . The Government of India would stress the special urgency of the Security Council taking immediate

action on their request. . . . The text of this reference to the Security Council is being telegraphed to the Government of Pakistan.

[From Letter of India to the Security Council (S/628), *Security Council Official Records, Supplement*, November 1948, Annex 28.]

The Council's Resolution

The Security Council considered the dispute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir on numerous occasions and passed a number of resolutions for its solution, but the one of April 21, 1948, includes provisions that were reiterated in various forms. At the heart of the Security Council resolutions were the restoration of peace and order, the holding of a plebiscite to permit the people of the former state of Jammu and Kashmir to decide if they would join India or Pakistan, and, to accomplish this, a United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan, under a representative appointed by the Council. Pakistan regarded the holding of the plebiscite as absolutely vital, whereas India found it unacceptable. Looking back over the various actions of the Security Council and its representatives, the prime minister told the Indian Parliament on March 28, 1951, that India had not gone to the United Nations to determine the issue of sovereignty in Kashmir; that was known. India had gone to the UN to complain about Pakistan's aggression in India's territory. The Indian government denied the validity of the statement in the resolution that it had agreed to a plebiscite. This resolution was submitted by Belgium, Canada, China, Colombia, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. The Security Council had no way of enforcing its recommendations to India and Pakistan. India's response to the resolution was coolly polite, saying that if, despite India's objections, the Commission wished to visit India, the government would be glad to confer with the members, but there could be no question of the Commission's implementing the resolution of April 21.

The Security Council,

Having considered the complaint of the Government of India concerning the dispute over the State of Jammu and Kashmir,

Having heard the representative of India in support of that complaint and the reply and counter-complaints of the representative of Pakistan . . .

Noting with satisfaction that both India and Pakistan desire that the question of the accession of Jammu and Kashmir should be decided through the democratic method of free and impartial plebiscite . . .

Instructs the Commission to proceed at once to the Indian subcontinent and there place its good offices and mediation at the disposal of the Governments of India and Pakistan . . . both with respect to the restoration of peace and order and to the holding of a plebiscite by the two governments, acting in cooperation with one another and with the Commission . . .

Restoration of Peace and Order . . . the Government of Pakistan should undertake . . . to secure the withdrawal from the State of Jammu and Kashmir of

tribesmen and Pakistani nationals not normally resident therein. . . . The Government of India should, when it is established that the tribesmen are withdrawing and that arrangements for the cessation of fighting have become effective, put into operation in consultation with the Commission a plan for withdrawing their own forces from Jammu and Kashmir . . .

The Government of India should undertake that there will be established in Jammu and Kashmir a Plebiscite Administration to hold a plebiscite as soon as possible on the question of the accession of the State to India or Pakistan.

[From Security Council Resolution, April 21, 1948 (S/726),
Security Council Documents.]

Article 370 of the Constitution

In recognition of having taken the dispute with Pakistan over Jammu and Kashmir to the Security Council of the United Nations, the Indian Constitution recognizes that that state has a special status, different from that of the other states of the Union in regard to provisions in effect at the time of the takeover by India in 1948 through what was known as the “Instrument of Accession.” Over the years, this constitutional provision has been denounced, especially by Hindu nationalists, as a concession to Muslims that weakens Indian unity. Kashmiris have seen it as a guarantee of a larger measure of autonomy than that enjoyed by other states, even though this part of the Constitution was headed “Temporary and Transitional Provisions.”

(1), (b) the power of Parliament to make laws for the said State shall be limited to those matters . . . which, in consultation with the Government of the State, are declared by the President to correspond to matters specified in the Instrument of Accession governing the accession of the State to the Dominion of India as the matters with respect to which the Dominion Legislature may make laws for that State.

[From *The Constitution of India*, 161.]

Sheikh Abdullah: Kashmiri Patriot

Sheikh Abdullah (1905–1982), one of the founders of the Muslim Conference, later the National Conference, led the struggle for democratic rights against Maharaja Hari Singh, the autocratic ruler of Jammu and Kashmir. He worked closely with Jawaharlal Nehru and the Indian National Congress, for which he was jailed by the maharaja. Following the intrusion of Pakistani forces into the state and the accession of Kashmir to India in 1948, he became prime minister of the state. The Indian government, however, became increasingly suspicious that he was seeking independence, or intending to unite with Pakistan. There were also widespread rumors that he was collaborating with the United States. The Indian government claimed that the speech excerpted

below, which he made in August 1952, showed his unwillingness to merge the state fully with India. In 1953 he was dismissed as prime minister by the Indian government and jailed for ten years. He was released in 1964 and became chief minister in 1975. He died in office in 1982. The following selection is an extract from the statement of Sheikh Abdullah in the State Constituent Assembly of Kashmir on August 11, 1952.

The Government of India held the view that the fact that the Jammu and Kashmir State was a constituent unit of the Union of India led inevitably to certain consequences in regard to some important matters, namely: . . .

Residuary Powers: It was agreed that while under the present Indian Constitution, the Residuary Powers vested in the Centre in respect of all the states other than Jammu and Kashmir, in the case of our state, they rested in the State itself. This position is compatible with Article 370 of the Indian Constitution and the Instrument of Accession on which this Article is based. We have always held that the ultimate source of sovereignty resides in the people. It is, therefore, from the people that all powers can flow. Under these circumstances, it is up to the people of Kashmir through this Assembly to transfer more powers for mutual advantage to the custody of the Union Centre.

Citizenship: It was agreed that in accordance with Article 5 of the Indian Constitution persons who have their domicile in the Jammu and Kashmir State shall be the citizens of India. It was further agreed that the State legislature shall have power to define and regulate the rights and privileges of the permanent residents of the State, more especially in regard to acquisition of immovable property, appointments to services and like matters. . . .

Fundamental Rights: It was agreed . . . that the Fundamental Rights, which are contained in the Constitution of India, could not be conferred on the residents of the Jammu and Kashmir State in their entirety taking into account the economic, social and political character of our movements as enunciated in the New Kashmir Plan. . . .

Supreme Court: It was agreed that the Supreme Court should have original jurisdiction in respect of disputes mentioned in Article 131 of the Constitution of India. . . .

National Flag: We agreed that . . . for historical and other reasons connected with the freedom struggle in the State, the need for the continuance of [the State] flag was recognised. . . .

President of India: It was agreed that the powers to grant reprieve and commute death sentences, etc. should also belong to the President of the Union.

Headship of the State: I am glad to inform this House that the Government of India have appreciated the principle proposed by the Basic Principle Committee as adopted by this Assembly in regard to the abolition of the hereditary rulership of the State. . . .

Financial Integration: In regard to this subject, we agreed that it would be necessary to evolve some sort of financial arrangement between the State and the Indian Union. . . .

Emergency Powers: . . . In the event of war or external aggression, . . . the Government of India would have full authority to take any steps in connection with the defence, etc. In particular, we were averse to internal disturbance being referred to in this connection, as even some petty internal disorder might be considered sufficient for the application of Article 352 [Proclamation by President of India that an emergency existed in the State]. In reply it was pointed out that Article 352 could only be applied in a state of grave emergency and not because of some small disorder or disturbance.

In order to meet our viewpoint, it was suggested on behalf of the Government of India that Article 352 might be accepted as it is with the addition at the end of the first paragraph (1) of the following words: “but in regard to internal disturbance at the request or with the concurrence of the Government of the State.”

We generally accepted this position, but wanted some time to consider the implications and consequences as laid down in Articles 353, 358 and 359 [giving the President power to decree an Emergency] which on the whole we accepted. In regard to Article 354, we wanted to examine it further before expressing our opinion [the articles have to do with the Central government and taxation]. . . .

Conduct of Elections to Houses of Parliament: . . . I have put before this House the broad indications of the agreements arrived at between us and the Government of India. As the Hon’ble Members will no doubt observe, the attitude of the Government of India has been most helpful. A satisfactory position has emerged and we are now able to assess the basic issues of our constitutional relationship with India in clearer terms. There has been a good deal of accommodation of our respective points of view. Both the representatives of the Government of India and the Kashmir Delegation, have been impelled by the desire to strengthen further the existing relationship to remove all obscurity and vagueness. . . .

It is, of course, for the Constituent Assembly [of Kashmir], which is seized of these matters, to determine the extent and scope of the state’s accession to India. The Assembly may agree to continue this relationship on the present basis or extend its scope as it might like and consider feasible and proper. In the course of framing the constitution for the State, the Hon’ble Members of this Assembly will have an opportunity of discussing these agreements and expressing their views thereon.

[Vidya Bhushan, *State Politics and Government: Jammu and Kashmir* (Jammu: Jay Kay Book House, 1985), 395–400.]

Home Minister G. B. Pant: Rethinking the Plebiscite

As the following statement indicates, the government of India’s attitude toward the settlement of the Kashmir issue by a plebiscite had changed through the years. At first, Nehru had been willing to hold a plebiscite, but he shifted his position when he

became aware of the strong opposition to the idea in India. The most forthright acknowledgment of the new position came, however, from the powerful Home Minister, G. B. Pant. He argued that Pakistan's military alliance with the United States, as well as strong criticism within the Indian National Congress, had made the idea impractical. The Pakistan press denounced the statement as exemplifying India's duplicity.

We made certain statements when Kashmir acceded to India which cannot be denied. But when we made the statements circumstances were different from what they are now. The time factor is very important. Many things have changed since then. During these eight years Kashmir has been following a certain policy for its advancement and many development schemes are in progress. Pakistan has entered into a military alliance with America. The Constituent Assembly of Kashmir which was elected on the basis of adult franchise has taken a definite decision. Resolutions passed by the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference on the eve of the elections to the Constituent Assembly and the inaugural address delivered by Sheikh Abdullah made it abundantly clear that the Constituent Assembly had been constituted for the purpose of determining and deciding this vital issue. While I am not oblivious of the initial declaration made by the Government of India I cannot ignore the important series of facts. . . . The Pakistan Government has failed to agree to any reasonable conditions for a plebiscite, nor do I see any possibility of its agreeing to any. We are anxious to reach an agreement with Pakistan on all points. We would like the best neighbourly relations to exist between India and Pakistan.

[G. B. Pant, Speech at Srinagar, July 8, 1955, quoted, with comments from Pakistani newspapers, in Sisir Gupta, *Kashmir: A Study in India-Pakistan Relations* (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1966), 293–294.]

Sheikh Abdullah's shift to a more pro-Congress line allowed him to become chief minister, but lost him much of his popular support. The control of the state by the center belied the promise of Article 370 of the Constitution, which was to have provided Kashmir with considerable autonomy. In practice, the central government did not give this freedom to the state; rather, it ruled with a heavy hand.

Through the 1980s resentments grew; in 1989–1990, these gave rise to an insurgency. At first this revolt involved Indian Kashmiris, was led by the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), and was Muslim but not Islamist. However, the JKLF was succeeded and pushed aside by a more violent and ruthless organization, the Jammu and Kashmir Hizb-ul Mujahideen (JKHM, "Warriors of the Faith"), which was Islamist and was linked to groups trained in Pakistan, such as Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad. The JKHM and its allies carried on a murderous campaign not only against Indian security forces but also against the JKLF and non-Muslims in Kashmir. They imported foreign fighters to Kashmir and spread the revolt to the rural areas.

Negotiations between India and Pakistan, as well as wars in 1965 and 1971 and then the Kargil episode in 1999, have gone on over decades. The Ceasefire Line of 1949 was changed to the Line of Control in 1972, and there have been efforts at small, incremental advances, such as the bus route between the two parts of Kashmir—Azad Kashmir, as Pakistan calls its part, and the state of Jammu and Kashmir in India. Peace proposals that would involve India, Pakistan, and all Kashmiris have been legion, and all have required an escape from the death-grip of the past. For will India, which has preferred the status quo even at great cost in lives, rupees, and military involvement, give up its claims over Kashmir in exchange for some other arrangement preferred by most Kashmiris? Will Pakistan let go of its claim to the Kashmir Valley and its Muslim-majority population, in exchange for some other connection of the two parts of Kashmir and the two nations that would serve the people of Kashmir more equitably? And will the Kashmiris—many of whom want an independent entity, some of whom want to join Pakistan, and some of whom wish to remain tied to India—accept a plan that gives those holding each view something of what they want, perhaps with greatly increased autonomy on both sides of the border as well as a more porous frontier across which Kashmiris could move?

PUNJAB

The second challenge to the unity and integrity of the nation was the insurgency in the 1980s in Punjab, a state central to the territorial and historical heartland of India. The disputes involved issues of national and state political rivalries, as well as an appeal to self-determination based upon the demand by a faction of Sikhs for a national homeland for Sikhs, to be called “Khalistan.” The alienation of groups of young men, the pressures of electoral politics, and misjudgments by national leaders led to widespread violence against Hindus who were regarded as the enemies of the Sikh community, as well as against established figures in the Sikh community.

Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale’s Call “for our faith, for the Sikh nation, for the oppressed”

The unrest found leadership in a fiery young preacher, Sant Jarnail Bhindranwale (1947–1984), a spokesman for and leader of the mingling of politics, historical memories, and religious enthusiasm that constituted the Punjab insurgency. Born into a poor family, he was educated in a traditional religious school of what is often called a “fundamentalist” branch of Sikhism, the Damdami Taksal. He denounced the older, more moderate Sikhs who led the Akali Dal political party as betrayers of true Sikhism. The Akali Dal was the opponent of the Indian National Congress after 1947, and when the Congress leaders in Punjab looked for a popular religious spokesman to oppose the Akalis, they chose Bhindranwale. He did not prove a useful ally because he soon turned against the Congress leaders, whom he denounced as Hindu oppressors of

the Sikhs. Many of his followers, both in India and abroad, became proponents of an independent Sikh state, although his own political aims were never clearly enunciated. He was killed in June 1984 when the Indian Army seized the Golden Temple, the symbol of Sikhism, where he had established his headquarters. The subsequent assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by one of her Sikh guards in 1984 led to riots in Delhi and elsewhere, in which thousands of Sikhs were killed by mainly Hindu mobs. The insurgency was finally put down in 1992 by the Indian government. Bhindranwale's memory and message survive among small groups who see him in as standing in the tradition of Sikh martyrs willing to fight and die for the faith.

The following short, somewhat disjointed, selections are from some of his talks and sermons.

Stay peaceful but be prepared. I appeal to the entire [Sikh nation.] We have orders . . . to stay peaceful. Peace is necessary too. But I shall certainly say that it should not be such peace that the Sikh Nation is destroyed, that [politicians] should set about annihilating the Sikhs and we maintain peace. I am not in favour of such peacefulness. We have to maintain peace, we have to obey orders. So long as the Government confines its activities to outside [the Golden Temple], definitely stay cool because we are engaged in the *Dharam Yudh Morcha* [religious struggle]. We all have to achieve success in this struggle. We have to secure our rights. However, when at any time, on any day, the Government enters the boundary of this complex to destroy its sanctity, let me appeal most strongly to the entire Sikh congregation—to all of you who live in villages, towns and in the entire country—that when you learn that they have entered the boundary of the complex and attacked, then it will be your responsibility everywhere to kill every critic of the Guru and every enemy of the Sikh Nation. At that time there should be no hesitation on your part.

Sikhs are a separate nation. My educated brothers must have been delighted at the news that appeared some three or four days back. In connection with the [wearing of the Sikh] turban there has been a decision in England. . . . It is a weighty matter. The Parliament in England has decided that not only are the Sikhs a separate nation, they are a separate race.

Sikhs are identified exclusively as extremists. On an earlier day too I made a statement that if Sikhs are a part of Hindus and are not a separate entity, then they should start saying in the newspapers, in the Parliament, in the Assemblies [State Legislatures], that Hindus are extremists. And if Sikhs are extremists, then they have to admit Sikhs are a separate nation. They exclusively call the Sikhs extremists, but collectively we are all Hindu.

Atrocities by the present government. A young daughter of the Sikhs was stripped naked, and . . . her father was forcibly laid on her. [In another village,

the police] stripped [a] daughter naked, and . . . had her held by her breasts and paraded [her] through the village. Has it ever happened to a Hindu? Tell me, if there is a single example. . . . Only the homes of Sikhs have been set on fire by the police. Has a single Hindu home been set on fire by the police in the whole of Punjab? . . . Prove even a single one of the statements that I am going to make before you to be wrong. I promise you, standing here in [the Sikh headquarters], I shall chop off my head and place it at your feet. Such blatant discrimination is going on.

[*Struggle for Justice: Speeches and Conversations of Sant Jarnail Singh Khalsa Bhindranwale*, translated from Punjabi audio and visual recordings by Ranbir Singh Sandhu (Dublin, OH: Sikh Educational and Religious Foundation, 1999), 72, 74, 90–91.]

NAGALAND

Nagaland is part of the mountainous region in Northeast India that in the British period was known as the North-East Frontier Agency, officially claimed by the British but left in the control of numerous tribal chieftains. The Nagas, numbering about a million people, were one such tribe, differentiated from others by customs and language, and also by the fact that many of them had adopted Christian beliefs and developed their own leadership. These leaders were the nucleus of the Naga National Council, formed in 1946, which asserted that the Nagas constituted a nation separate from India; on August 14, 1947, the day before India became independent, they issued their own declaration of independence as the Naga nation.

A. Z. Phizo: The Demand for Self-Determination

An underground movement was started by a well-educated Christian, A. Z. Phizo (1903–1990), and began making violent attacks on Indian soldiers, policemen, and administrators who tried to assert the authority of the Indian government. Phizo fled to London in 1956 and died there in 1990, but the insurgency in the Northeast still remains, despite the Indian army's efforts to repress it.

The selection given here is from a speech made by Phizo in 1951 at a great gathering called to demand a plebiscite to show the Nagas' desire to be free from India. It is a kind of template of nationalist movements everywhere in the twentieth century, including India, with its identification of a freedom-loving people held down by an oppressor. Nagaland was made the sixteenth state of the Indian Union in December 1963.

Today is a great day for our people. Throughout Nagaland our people are ceremoniously observing this day May 16 as the day of our Plebiscite Day, which we are going to record by taking the thumb impression of our people. This we are doing to show India and the world of our aspiration and that there is an effective

unity of the people in Nagaland. We have been living as a subject nation for the last 70 years. Our country was an Independent country before the British conquered us with superior force of arms. The British left our country and India in the year 1947. Without making any special arrangement for our country the British abandoned us and we found ourselves under the mercy of the Indian people. . . .

I am not going into details of our past experiences with India especially since 1947. Prior to the transference by the British of their administrative authority and controlling over—that is, military and police—into the hands of Indians, we had talked to the British for our Independence. But there again we made a mistake. We had not put it in writing for record. Anyway, we the Naga people declared ourselves Independent on the 14th of August, 1947, and on the same day we informed India by telegram, and cabled to UNO for information and record. Since then, we have tried to settle our political issue with India on various occasions. But we have not been successful. As a result we have gathered here together in order to try to convince India of our inherent right to be free and equal to any other nation as a distinct people. . . .

When we examine those rapacious assertions, accusations and misapprehensions we find that the Indians do not know the Nagas. India tried to stop our Independence, they are still trying; and, they will probably continue to do so. . . . The history of progress and freedom have been written and will continue to be written. Most of the histories of human freedom were recorded in human blood. Most of the foundations of free nations were built on human bones and crushed skulls. But we want our national independence to remain holy and pure. We do not want to mix freedom, and our independence, with human blood. We do hope we shall not be compelled to live on a structure founded on human skulls and bones. We are determined to extricate ourself clear with understanding, by goodwill and through reason, so that we may continue to live in freedom and enjoy national independence. . . .

I always have a feeling that God, our Heavenly Father—our creator is with us and guiding us. . . . The Nagas do not ask Independence from India; indeed, we do not want anything from India. India has nothing to give away to Nagaland. We are Independent and sovereign in our own national right. What we ask is not to interfere [with] our administration but leave us alone and allow Nagaland, the national state of the Nagas, to continue to exist in peace and make progress without hindrance. . . .

Now that India is free, we appeal to them to exercise their sovereign right to let the Nagas continue to remain free and independent which, in verity, is in keeping with the precept of Mahatma Gandhi's creed of "Non-violence." . . .

India puts forward various arguments in their attempt to confound us. The first argument is about the "menace" of China and Burma. They always say this trying to scare us which we do not have the least thing to worry. The second argument is what they called "strategy" for security of India. Just as much as India needs precaution for her security other countries also require the same

precaution. . . . The third Indian argument is about economy. The Indians say that Nagaland cannot maintain itself economically as if we are sort of just crawling out from a hole. Their talk is nothing but insult. The truth is, Nagaland had never been dependent on India at any time in history. . . .

Being a nation the Nagas have their own distinct way of manners and living; and it is quite possible that we think differently in many respects. In our country, land belongs to the people as private property, and every family possesses land. We uphold every person as sovereign: man and women alike. Every family is a landlord; but, there is no landlordism in Nagaland. Democracy is the very spirit in our country. Land being so owned by the people who are in their person sovereign, there is a sound economic basis and there is no room for anyone to grudge or complain against social injustice. If our Naga civilization is not destroyed there is no possibility for any section of our people to become servile or entirely dependent on someone. . . .

We do not like to mention about the Indians at all at any time. We have nothing to do with them. . . .

India wanted to dump her excess population in Nagaland as well as exploit the rich natural resources in our territory. This is so dangerous that it threatens our very existence. Being a small nation (almost a 1000th part of India), we can easily be submerged and get lost: our culture, our civilization, our institutions, our nation and all that we had struggled [to] build up as we are today will be perished without the least benefit to mankind. And, these we shall lose not happily but in anger and in perpetual sorrow. If such a day were to be forced on us, God forbid—it would have been better none of us were ever born into this world.

Someone may tell us that Nagas are Christians following a foreign religion. The Indians publicly say this. We do not take Christianity as foreign religion any more than we consider the light of the sun as foreign origin from outer world. There is a father-creator (Ukepenopfü) as we call it. He is God. The message of the Gospel fulfills our Naga conception of religion—Nanyü—which literally means “anguish of mind” for which we do worship. Once we came to know that there is a personal Saviour to whom one can talk or pray directly, the real light dawned on us, and the weight of man’s “anguish of mind” greatly vanish away. It is the end of the beginning of our personal realization in relieving the anguish of mind in this world and for the next world after death. Whatever the Indians may say of us, there is no foreignness in relationship between father and child; that is, between God the Father and His children. . . .

NOW WE ARE HERE TODAY to reaffirm the stand of our Naga nation that we do not need India and we do not want her. We are here today to prove to INDIA and to the world that NAGALAND is united and that our nation aspires . . . to continue to be independent as a distinct nation as we are and have always been in the sovereign national state of the Nagas of Nagaland. . . .

We want to keep in our possession as a heritage something which is exclusively of Nagaland; something which is bound to vanish and be lost to the Nagas

if they were to live under an alien direction. . . . We want to make our country a place of happiness, of security and rest. We hope and we cherish that we can make our country a meeting place of the East and an understanding center of the world. We believe that we shall become a better friend and that we can remain a better friend to India and the outside world if we are left to ourselves—unmolested and unexploited. We believe that it is not only for Nagaland but for India and other surrounding countries as well that there is a better chance of creating and retaining peace and good will with a SOVEREIGN NAGALAND being in existence. Above everything else, we want to be free as a distinct nation: and we shall be free.

[Angami Zapu Phizo, Address to the Naga National Council,
May 16, 1951, <http://www.neuenhofer.de/guenter/nagaland/phizo.html>.]

DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION

The Preamble to the Constitution declared that India was a democratic republic; and while it contains no definition of democracy, numerous articles provide for the framework of practices generally considered essential features of a democratic society. These include freedom of speech, assembly, and religion, a commitment to free education for all citizens, adult suffrage, elections carefully monitored by nonpartisan bodies, protection of minorities, a definition of citizenship without reference to religion, caste, or sex, property rights, and an independent judiciary.

The main foci of power in the Indian federal system are the central and state governments, where elected legislative bodies share powers as allocated by the Indian Constitution. During the decades since Independence, there have been pressures to work out a system where power was not centralized only at the top of a hierarchy, but was also able to accommodate voices and concerns from below. Mahatma Gandhi was a strong advocate of the devolution of power to local institutions. He wanted the revival of the old institution of the panchayat, or group of five village elders who settled disputes and made decisions at the lowest level. Jawaharlal Nehru had some sympathy for local input and community development, but he presided over a system that worked from the top down, not the reverse. Although state leaders were often resistant to the delegation of power to the villages and districts, some states—notably West Bengal, under a leftist government from 1977—passed laws establishing panchayats.

Then in 1992 the Seventy-Third Amendment to the Indian Constitution was passed to establish panchayats throughout India. This amendment act provides for the devolution of power and responsibilities to local bodies and a role for them in the preparation and implementation of development schemes. It also stipulates that one-third of panchayat members be women. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are also to have reserved seats. The scheme envisions a three-tier system, from the district to the block and the village. A further act in 1996 extended its scope to the tribal areas of eight states.

In the Constituent Assembly debates of 1947–1950, while there was enthusiastic praise of democracy as a defining ideology, there were also a few critics, with some loyal Gandhians seeing it as a repudiation of Gandhi's belief in the centrality of villages, and some Muslim members speaking of the danger of tyranny in the rule of the Hindu majority. There was also questioning of the suitability of political democracy to a pluralistic society, divided by language, regional differences, class, and religion, and with a vast poor, illiterate population. Many argued that democracy was an artifact of Western history and culture and could not be transferred to the alien soil of India. There was, however, a generalized acceptance of the practice of democratic politics as the correct pathway for India. Examples of such questionings are given here.

B. R. AMBEDKAR: CAN DEMOCRACY SURVIVE IN INDIA?

In November 1949, at the third and final reading of the bill to enact the new constitution into law, Ambedkar warned the Constituent Assembly of the dangers both to India's independence and to her democratic constitution. As remedies, he advised devotion to the country, an end to civil disobedience, avoidance of hero-worship, the fostering of social and economic equality, and adherence to constitutional methods of self-government. His reading of Buddhist history, while perhaps fanciful, was indicative of his wish to use the past as a guide to the present. Further, his insight that bhakti, devotional religion, has a function in Indian political life is interesting, suggesting an explanation for the part played for fifty of the first sixty years by what Indians call the "Nehru Dynasty."

On the 26th of January 1950, India would be a democratic country in the sense that India from that day would have a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. The same thought comes to my mind. What would happen to her democratic Constitution? Will she be able to maintain it or will she lose it again? This is the second thought that comes to my mind and makes me as anxious as the first.

It is not that India did not know what is Democracy. There was a time when India was studded with republics, and even where there were monarchies, they were either elected or limited. They were never absolute. It is not that India did not know Parliaments or Parliamentary Procedure. A study of the Buddhist Bhikshu Sanghas [monastic orders] discloses that not only there were Parliaments—for the Sanghas were nothing but Parliaments—but the Sanghas knew and observed all the rules of Parliamentary Procedure known to modern times. . . . This democratic system India lost. Will she lose it a second time? I do not know. But it is quite possible in a country like India—where democracy from its long disuse must be regarded as something quite new—there is danger of democracy

giving place to dictatorship. It is quite possible for this new born democracy to retain its form but give place to dictatorship in fact. If there is a landslide, the danger of the second possibility becoming actuality is much greater.

If we wish to maintain democracy not merely in form, but also in fact, what must we do? The first thing in my judgment we must do is to hold fast to constitutional methods of achieving our social and economic objectives. It means we must abandon the bloody methods of revolution. It means that we must abandon the method of civil disobedience, non-cooperation and satyagraha. When there was no way left for constitutional methods for achieving economic and social objectives, there was a great deal of justification for unconstitutional methods. But where constitutional methods are open, there can be no justification for these unconstitutional methods. These methods are nothing but the Grammar of Anarchy and the sooner they are abandoned, the better for us.

The second thing we must do is to observe the caution which John Stuart Mill has given to all who are interested in the maintenance of democracy, namely, not "to lay their liberties at the feet of even a great man, or to trust him with powers which enable him to subvert their institutions." This caution is far more necessary in the case of India than in the case of any other country. For in India, Bhakti or what may be called the path of devotion or hero-worship, plays a part in its politics unequalled in magnitude by the part it plays in the politics of any other country in the world. Bhakti in religion may be a road to the salvation of the soul. But in politics, Bhakti or hero-worship is a sure road to degradation and to eventual dictatorship.

The third thing we must do is not to be content with mere political democracy. We must make our political democracy a social democracy as well. Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy. What does social democracy mean? It means a way of life which recognizes liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life. These principles of liberty, equality and fraternity are not to be treated as separate items in a trinity. They form a union of trinity in the sense that to divorce one from the other is to defeat the very purpose of democracy. Liberty cannot be divorced from equality, equality cannot be divorced from liberty. Nor can liberty and equality be divorced from fraternity. Without equality, liberty would produce the supremacy of the few over the many. Equality without liberty would kill individual initiative. Without fraternity, liberty and equality could not become a natural course of things. It would require a constable to enforce them.

[From *Constituent Assembly Debates*, 11:977-981.]

"ANONYMOUS" ON NEHRU AS POSSIBLE DICTATOR

The claim that India needed to be guided by a strong authoritarian hand was a frequent argument of the British rulers and became common among some Indians. One of the most interesting comments on the subject is contained in an anonymous article that appeared in November 1937, suggesting that Jawaharlal Nehru was a potential

dictator. The article was in fact written by Nehru himself, and offers fascinating insights into his understanding both of his own character and of India. Chanakya, the alias he assumed, was the name of the ancient Indian writer, also known as Kautilya (see volume 1), who urged the necessity of a strong, authoritarian ruler.

Jawaharlal ki jai! (Hail Jawaharlal!) The Rashtrapati (President) looked up as he passed swiftly through the waiting crowds; his hands went up, and his pale, hard face was lit up with a smile. . . . The smile passed away and the face became stern and sad. Almost it seemed as the smile and the gesture accompanying it had little reality; they were just tricks of the trade to gain the good will of the crowd whose darling he had become. Was it so? Watch him again.

Is all this natural, or the carefully thought out trickery of the public man? Perhaps it is both, and the long habit has become second nature now. The most effective pose is the one in which there seems to be least posing, and Jawaharlal has learned well to act without the paint and powder of the actor. . . . Whither is this going to lead him and the country? . . .

Steadfastly and persistently he goes on increasing his personal prestige and influence. . . . From far North to Cape Comorin he has gone like some triumphant Caesar, leaving a glory and a legend behind him. . . .

What if the fancy turns? Men like Jawaharlal, with all their great capacity for great and good work, are unsafe in a democracy. He calls himself a democrat and socialist, and no doubt he does so in all earnestness, . . . but a little twist and he might turn into a dictator, . . . we all know how fascism has fattened on this language and then cast it away as useless lumber. . . .

Jawaharlal cannot become fascist. . . . He is too much an aristocrat for the crudity and vulgarity of fascism. . . . And yet he has all the makings of a dictator in him—vast popularity, a strong will, energy, pride and intolerance of others and a certain contempt for the weak and inefficient. . . . His conceit is already formidable. It must be checked. . . . It is not thorough Caesarism that India will attain freedom, and though she might prosper a little under a benevolent and efficient despotism, she will remain stunted and the day of her emancipation of her people will be delayed.

[Chanakya, "The Rashtrapati," in *Modern Review* 62 (Jan.–Dec. 1937): 546–547.]

THE RULE OF INDIRA GANDHI (1966–1977, 1980–1984) AND THE EMERGENCY: THREATS TO INDIAN DEMOCRACY

Indira Gandhi (1917–1984), daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister, and Kamala Nehru, endured an occasionally pampered but also difficult and sometimes lonely childhood. Her father was often in prison and her mother ill. She was educated in schools in Europe and India, and at Oxford University. Against the wishes of her father, she married Feroze Gandhi (no relation of the Mahatma), who was a

member of the small Parsi community and a Congress activist and Member of Parliament, and had two sons, Rajiv (1944–1991) and Sanjay (1946–1980). She and her husband parted after a few years, and she became the organizer of her father's household. She had long been interested in politics, and entered the ring as president of the Congress Party in 1959. With her father's death, she became Minister for Information; and upon the death of Lal Bahadur Shastri, she became prime minister in 1966. Although the "Syndicate," a group of Congress leaders who ran the party, believed her to be malleable, she shortly proved to be a tough and wily politician. She challenged their leadership of the party, and when the party split she led her group, the Congress (I), to election victories in 1971–1972, after her successful conduct of the Bangladesh war for independence. As prime minister she was counseled by a small group that included her son Sanjay, and she weakened the regional Congress parties by deciding that she herself should choose regional candidates and leaders. She also carried through several populist measures, including bank nationalization and withdrawal of the privy purses of the princes.

On June 12, 1975, Gandhi was found guilty by a High Court decision of illegal practices in her election in 1971. Her critics had already mounted a fierce campaign against her, and on June 26, 1975, with the consent of the President of India, and eventually of her Cabinet, she proclaimed a State of Emergency in a radio broadcast. (This was legal under Article of 352 of the Constitution, which decrees that when the president has declared that an Emergency exists, his decision is "final and conclusive and shall not be questioned in any court on any ground.") In rather elliptical language, she referred to recent dangers to the state that required drastic action. This entailed the suspension of many features of the legal framework and of democratic freedoms, including free speech, habeas corpus, and political parties; it also included the imposition of press censorship and the imprisonment of opponents, including Morarji Desai and Jayaprakash Narayan, one of the most famous leaders of the Indian National Congress. Elections slated for 1976 were postponed. Hundreds of lesser politicians from other parties, especially Hindu nationalists and critics of the government, were quickly rounded up. There was widespread criticism from Western democracies, but the Emergency had been so carefully planned and swiftly executed that for a time opposition at home was effectively silenced. It seemed that democracy had been crushed with surprising efficiency.

PRIME MINISTER GANDHI: BROADCAST TO THE NATION

The following is the radio broadcast in which Prime Minister Gandhi announced the sweeping changes to come.

The President has proclaimed the emergency. This is nothing to panic about.

I am sure you are all conscious of the deep and widespread conspiracy, which has been brewing ever since I began to introduce certain progressive measures of benefit to the common man and woman of India. In the name of democracy,

it has been sought to negate the very functioning of democracy. Duly elected governments have not been allowed to function and in some cases, force has been used to compel members to resign in order to dissolve lawfully elected assemblies. Agitations have surcharged the atmosphere, leading to violent incidents. The whole country was shocked at the brutal murder of my Cabinet colleague, Shri L. N. Mishra. We also deeply deplore the dastardly attack on the Chief Justice of India.

Certain persons have gone to the length of inciting our armed forces to mutiny and our police to rebel. The fact that our defence forces and the police are disciplined and deeply patriotic and, therefore, will not be taken in, does not mitigate the seriousness of the provocation.

The forces of disintegration are in full play and communal passions are being aroused, threatening our unity.

All manners of false allegations have been hurled at me. The Indian people have known me since my childhood. All my life has been in the service of our people. This is not a personal matter. It is not important whether I remain Prime Minister or not. However, the institution of the Prime Minister is important and the deliberate political attempts to denigrate it are not in the interest of democracy or of the nation.

We have watched these developments with utmost patience for long. Now we learn of a new programme challenging law and order throughout the country with a view to disrupting normal functioning. How can any Government worth the name stand by and allow the country's stability to be imperilled? The actions of a few are endangering the rights of the vast majority. Any situation, which weakens the capacity of the national Government to act decisively inside the country, is bound to encourage dangers from outside. It is our paramount duty to safeguard unity and stability. The nation's integrity demands firm action.

The threat to internal stability also affects production and prospects of economic improvement. In the last few months the determined action we have taken has succeeded in largely checking the price rise. We have been actively considering further measures to strengthen the economy and to relieve the hardship of various sections, particularly the poor and vulnerable and those with fixed incomes. I shall announce them soon.

I should like to assure you that the new emergency proclamation will in no way affect the rights of law-abiding citizens. I am sure that internal conditions will speedily improve to enable us to dispense with this proclamation as soon as possible. I have been overwhelmed by the messages of goodwill from all parts of India and all sections of the people. May I appeal for your continued co-operation and trust in the days ahead?

[From *Selected Speeches and Writings of Indira Gandhi*
(New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting,
Government of India, 1973–1986), 3:177.]

PRIME MINISTER GANDHI: PROMISES FOR THE
FUTURE AND THE TWENTY-POINT PROGRAM

Mrs. Gandhi followed up the shocking news of the suspension of democracy in a broadcast speech a few days later, on July 1, that justified her action and outlined a twenty-point program of economic reforms to improve deteriorating conditions. One well-known journalist described it at the time, but not in print, as "Pie in the sky, by and by."

I am going to speak to you today about some economic programmes which the Government proposes to follow. . . . Some of them are new. Others were set forth earlier but require to be pursued with greater vigour and determination. . . . The campaign of law-breaking, paralysing national activity and inciting our security forces to indiscipline and disobedience would have led to economic chaos and collapse and our country would have become vulnerable to fissiparous tendencies and external danger. With the fumes of hatred having cleared somewhat, we can see our economic goals with greater clarity and urgency. The emergency provides us a new opportunity to go ahead with our economic tasks. . . . I have only briefly outlined various parts of the new [twenty-point] programme, which will be taken up in the coming weeks. Other matters are being looked into and further measures will be announced from time to time. I have no doubt that together they will make a difference to the country's economic outlook. What is most urgent is that collectively we should shake off any sense of helplessness. The worst feature of the crisis, which was building over the last few months, was that it spread cynicism and sapped national self-confidence. There is a chance now to regain the nation's spirit of adventure. Let us get on with the job.

THE 20-POINT PROGRAMME (SUMMARY)

1. Continuance of steps to bring down prices of essential commodities. Streamlined production. Procurement and distribution of essential commodities. Strict economy in Government expenditure.
2. Implementation of Agricultural land ceilings and speedier distribution of surplus land and compilation of land records. Special care will be given to ensure that tribal people are not deprived of their lands.
3. Stepping up of provision of house-sites for landless and weaker sections in rural areas.
4. Bonded labour, wherever it exists[,] will be declared illegal.
5. Plan for liquidation of rural indebtedness. Legislation for moratorium on recovery of debt from landless labourers, small and marginal farmers owning less than two hectares of land and rural artisans.
6. Review of laws on minimum agricultural wages and suitable enhancement of minimum wages, wherever necessary.
7. Five million more hectares to be brought under irrigation. National Programme for use of underground water and further surveys taken

up for provision of drinking water, especially in drought-prone areas. 8. An accelerated power programme. Super thermal stations under Central Control. 9. New development plan for development of handloom sector. Policy of reservation for handlooms to be rationalised to give greater protection to weavers. 10. Improvement in quality and supply of people's cloth. 11. Socialisation of urban and urbanisable land. Ceiling on ownership and possession of vacant land and on plinth areas of new dwelling units. 12. Special squads for valuation of conspicuous construction and prevention of tax evasion. Summary trials and deterrent punishment for economic offenders. 13. Special legislation for confiscation of smugglers' properties. 14. Liberalisation of investment procedures. Action against misuse of import licences. 15. New Schemes for workers' participation in industries, particularly at the shop floor level and introduction of production programmes. 16. National permit scheme for road transport. 17. Income tax relief to middle class—exemption limit raised to Rs. 8,000. 18. Essential Commodities at controlled prices to students in hostels. 19. Books and Stationery at controlled prices to students; book banks to be established. 20. New apprenticeship scheme to enlarge employment and training. Special care will be taken to ensure a fair deal to Scheduled Castes and Tribes, minorities and handicapped persons in recruitment of apprentices.

[Indira Gandhi, *Selected Speeches and Writings*, 3:357–360.]

J. P. NARAYAN: TOTAL REVOLUTION AND DENOUNCING THE EMERGENCY

Jayaprakash Narayan (1902–1979), one of the best-known leaders of the Indian national movement, studied at the University of Wisconsin, where he joined the Communist Party, but on his return to India he allied himself with Nehru and the Socialist Party. Many, including Nehru, thought he would become prime minister after Nehru, but he left politics to agitate on behalf of the rural poor. He was imprisoned by Mrs. Gandhi in 1975 for allegedly urging the army to revolt. When he was released, very ill and embittered by his treatment in prison, but still believing in what he called “Total Revolution,” he gave an interview to a journalist, which is excerpted here.

Q. How will you describe the present situation in the country, particularly after June 26, 1975?

A. Within the last year, that is, from June 26, 1975, to now [June 26, 1976], India has been converted from a working democracy into a personal dictatorship of the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

Q. What programme should the people take to meet the present situation? . . .

A. I agree with you that the remedy is a non-violent people's struggle at all levels as you say. But as you know, that is easier said than done. The past year has shown that the people are still ignorant of and unconcerned about their

rights and duties as citizens of an independent and democratic country. A rather glaring proof of this was their complete passivity when their fundamental rights of speech, association, movement, etc., were suddenly taken away by Mrs. Gandhi. Had the people been conscious of their rights, in spite of the emergency there would have been country-wide protests and demonstrations. Therefore our present task is to go to the people: (a) to educate them about the fundamentals of democracy and their relevance to their life; (b) to organise them in appropriate organs of struggle.

Q. Is it not true that the present situation is the culmination of the process initiated by Nehru? When Gandhi suggested to keep the Congress as a national movement and to complete the programme of social, economic and moral revolution in the country, Nehru was creating a situation for an authoritarian rule in the country by converting the Congress into an election machine to capture political power. Do you agree?

A. You are quite right in drawing this vital distinction between Gandhi's and Nehru's position after independence. Nehru made the sad mistake of assuming that a new India could be created merely through the power and resources of the State. Therefore not only did he neglect the tasks of converting the Congress into the people's instrument for national reconstruction and social change but he deliberately reduced it to a mere election machine. . . . Gandhiji, on the other hand, believed that unless the people were actually involved in it, the task of national reconstruction could never be fulfilled. It was for that reason that he wanted to preserve the character of the Congress as a people's movement by reconstituting it as Lok Sevak Sangh [Association of the Servants of the People].

Q. You had struggled against the foreign government for the country's liberation and now you are fighting for social change. Earlier you believed in violent means and now you are completely non-violent. You have therefore the experience of both. What programme of action will you suggest?

A. If Mrs. Gandhi's tyrannical rule has to be ended and Indian democracy revived, it can be done only by the people's peaceful movement. . . . Unfortunately for this country, Mrs. Gandhi's greatest achievement is that she has instilled fear in the hearts of the people and made them cowards and sycophants. Perhaps there is something in our character, the character of the Indian people, that makes it easy for our rulers, even when they are democratically elected, to frighten us into submission. The supine manner in which the people, with few exceptions, reacted to Mrs. Gandhi's draconian measures of the 26th June, 1975, and thereafter is a proof of this weakness in our character. The millions who used to crowd my meetings and shout brave slogans just seem to have disappeared. Even the young men have been too cowed down to react.

To make the people shed their fear and stand up to any tyrant or unjust ruler is one of the more important tasks of nation-building. Unless we, as a people,

acquire the capacity to stand up to injustice, oppression and corruption, we would remain a weak nation.

[Jayaprakash Narayan, "Total Revolution: Its Future," June 27, 1976, an interview with Brahmanand, from *Towards Total Revolution*, ed. with an introduction by Brahmanand (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1978), 179–180, 188.]

THE SHAH COMMISSION: REPORT ON THE EMERGENCY

After Indira Gandhi was defeated in 1977, the new government, with her old opponent Morarji Desai as prime minister, appointed a commission headed by J. C. Shah, a former justice of the Supreme Court, to inquire into the excesses of the Emergency. The imprisonments without warrants and the censorship of the press were of concern, but the stories that were told everywhere had to do with forced sterilization of men to carry out the rigorous birth control program that was under the direction of her son, Sanjay, who had also been responsible for the leveling of slum housing areas in old Delhi to carry out city planning. The report is filled with accounts of the unconstitutional behavior of the government, with emphasis placed on Mrs. Gandhi's personal responsibility. Not many convictions followed from it, partly because she was reelected to Parliament in 1980, proving, she claimed, that the majority of the people supported the Emergency.

15.1. The Commission has by now a fairly comprehensive view of the excesses committed in Delhi during the period covered by the terms of reference, especially in relation to the circumstances in which imposition of the emergency was recommended, the manner in which certain key appointments were made for collateral purposes, the callousness with which arrests were ordered on false allegations to serve personal or party objectives and with a view to smother protest, the manner in which the statutory provisions governing detentions, confirmation of detentions and review of the detention orders were honoured in their breach, the total indifference displayed in considering even reasonable requests for parole and for revocation of detention orders and the ease with which established administrative procedures and conventions were subverted for the benefit of individuals, who had contacts at the "right places." With the Press gagged and a resultant black out of authentic information, arbitrary arrests and detentions went on apace. Effective dissent was smothered, followed by a general erosion of democratic values. Highhanded and arbitrary actions were carried out with impunity. The nation was initially in a state of shock, and then of stupor, unable to realise the directions and the full implications of the actions of the Government and its functionaries. Tyrants sprouted at all levels overnight—tyrants whose claim to authority was largely based on their proximity to the seats of power. The attitude of the general run of the public functionaries was

largely characterised by a paralysis of the will to do the right and proper thing. The ethical considerations inherent in public behaviour became generally dim and in many cases beyond the mental grasp of many of the public functionaries. Desire for self-preservation as admitted by a number of public servants at various levels became the sole motivation for their official actions and behaviour. Anxiety to survive at any cost formed the key-note of approach to the problems that came before many of them. The fear generated by the mere threat and without even the actual use of the weapon of detention under MISA [Maintenance of Internal Security Act] became so pervasive that the general run of public servants acted as willing tools of tyranny. That the primary and not infrequently the sole motivation in the case of a number of public servants who acted unlawfully to the prejudice of the rights of citizens, was the desire for self-protection—desire for survival—may be regarded as some extenuation of their conduct. Yet, if the nation is to preserve the fundamental values of a democratic society, every person whether a public functionary or private citizen must display a degree of vigilance and willingness to sacrifice. Without the awareness of what is right and a desire to act according to what is right there may be no realisation of what is wrong. During the emergency, for many a public functionary the dividing line between right and wrong, moral and immoral, ceased to exist.

15.5 . . . There is no evidence of circumstances which would warrant the declaration of an emergency, much less the imposition of an additional emergency. . . . There is no evidence of any breakdown of law and order in any part of the country—nor of any apprehension in that behalf; the economic condition was well under control and had in no way deteriorated. . . . The public records of the times, Secret, Confidential or Public and publications in newspapers, speak with unanimity that there was no unusual event or even a tendency in that direction to justify the imposition of emergency. There was no threat to the well-being of the nation from sources external or internal. The conclusion appears in the absence of any evidence given by Smt. [Mrs.] Indira Gandhi or any one else, that the one and the only motivating force for tendering the extraordinary advice to the President to declare an “internal emergency” was the intense political activity generated in the ruling party and the opposition, by the decision of the Allahabad High Court declaring the election of the Prime Minister of the day invalid on the ground of corrupt election practices. Thousands were detained and a series of totally illegal and unwarranted actions followed involving untold human misery and suffering. In the absence of any explanation, the inference is inevitable that a political decision was taken by an interested Prime Minister in a desperate endeavour to save herself from the legitimate compulsion of a judicial verdict against her.

15.6. The nation owes it to the present and the succeeding generations to ensure that the administrative set-up is not subverted in future in the manner it

was done, to serve the personal ends of any one individual or a group of individuals in or near the Government.

[Shah Commission of Inquiry, appointed under Section 3 of the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952, *Interim Report II*, April 26, 1978 (New Delhi: Government of India, 1978), chapter 15, sections 1, 5, 6.]

CHILDREN, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND THE STATE

In 1991 Myron Weiner (1931–1999), professor of political science at MIT, published an important study about the connection between child labor, education, and state policy in India. It was widely read by Indian officials, scholars, and others, and while it stimulated discussion, no widespread changes in the course of education resulted.

Perhaps the foremost foreign scholar of Indian politics, and a remarkably productive and intelligent scholar and teacher, Weiner argued that bureaucrats and the Indian elite in general agreed to laws requiring compulsory education for children and laws that banned child labor, but in practice disregarded both. His argument was that their mind-set was to blame for this neglect. They believed that lower-class children would be better prepared for work by working, even at the most menial jobs, rather than by attending school. So they disregarded their own laws, failing to implement compulsory education throughout the country. As a result, India had fallen far behind other developing countries, including China, South Korea, and Taiwan, in literacy rates. Year by year India was producing the largest number of new illiterates, as well as the most sizable child labor force, of any country in the world. Weiner maintained that this state of affairs was unfavorable to the long-term economic and social health of India.

MYRON WEINER: DIALOGUES ON EDUCATION

Weiner's book, *The Child and the State in India*, includes fascinating interviews from the mid-1980s with a range of officials, educators, and public intellectuals concerned with children and education. After a brief selection from some of these interviews, we have included the text of a recent law that yet again requires the compulsory education of India's children.

"Did you and other officials," I asked a senior official in the Ministry of Education, who had been working with Rajiv Gandhi on the government's new National Policy on Education, "consider making education compulsory? If you did, what were arguments for and against, and why was a decision made not to make it compulsory?"

"The question didn't arise," came the reply, "because we already have compulsory-education laws in sixteen of our twenty-two states, though given the social conditions in the country it has not been possible to enforce the laws."

I know, I continued, that you have numerous state laws called "Compulsory Education," but what you have is enabling legislation that permits local authorities to make education compulsory, but does not compel them.

"That's not so," the official contradicted me. "These laws may not be enforced, but they do provide for compulsory education. The question was raised in Parliament when the prime minister introduced the new education policy and my assistant researched the matter for us."

Once again I challenged him. I explained that my understanding was that the state legislation is modeled after the British Parliamentary Act of 1870, which says that local authorities are permitted to write rules requiring parents to send their children to school and setting penalties for those who fail to do so. A decade later, in 1880, the British Parliament passed legislation requiring local authorities to make education mandatory. I hadn't seen all the state legislation in India, but none that I had seen made it mandatory upon local authorities to establish compulsory education.

"You're wrong," said the official, and he called his assistant and instructed him to bring in the state legislation. After the assistant entered with a large folder in hand, I suggested we look at the legislation for Tamil Nadu since I had just been there, had read the legislation, and had discussed the matter with the former finance secretary of the government, who told me that none of the local authorities had ever made education compulsory. The assistant handed me the Tamil Nadu legislation and I recited from the relevant section (article 44): "any local authority may [my emphasis], by a resolution passed at a meeting specially convened for the purpose and supported by the votes of not less than two-thirds of the members present, resolve that elementary education shall be compulsory within the whole or a specified part of the local area under its jurisdiction."⁵

The official looked surprised. We then turned to other state laws. The Punjab law also said that local authorities "may" make education compulsory. I noted that in my travels I had found few local authorities that had made education compulsory and that state governments were not pressing local authorities to write bylaws to set up enforcement machinery.

"That's just as well," said the official. "I was once posted in a union territory which had a compulsory education act. I found poor people were subject to penalties for not sending their children to school. Some teachers were charging parents ten rupees a month for not reporting their children were not in school! How could a poor man send his son to school when he needs him to care for his cattle? Villages have no system of stall feeding. According to the Operations Research Group study there are forty-four million children working. If these children can't be prevented from working, then to impose compulsory education would be to deal with the problem in an ostrich-like fashion. There's a double problem. We have an educational system that is not adequate for our children, and a social system that obligates poor people not to send their children to school. So how can we punish poor parents if their children are not in

school? In 1995 the government will take a fresh look at child labor and then we can look at the compulsory education question. There is no point in saying things that you cannot do.

"I think," he continued, "that by and large the people of India want their children to be educated, so we do not need coercive power to send children to school. Besides, what right do we have to compel parents to send children to schools that are not worth much. The teachers aren't any good. Often they don't even appear at the school. We must first provide the country with schools that are worth something. Right now our schools are trash!" . . .

The most articulate and severe critic of India's educational system that I encountered was Mrs. Ela Bhatt. Mrs. Bhatt is a well-known social activist in Ahmedabad and a Member of Parliament. She is the founder and organizer of the Self-Employed Women's Association. SEWA has organized thousands of women and children, including workers in the bidi [leaf-wrapped cigarette] industry, garment makers, and ragpickers. . . . Ela Bhatt is regarded as the doyen of social activists in Ahmedabad. She has successfully brought together people in the unorganized sector, people not easily organized. She has created self-help projects and attracted attention and financial support from outside agencies. She is widely regarded as an articulate spokesperson for poor women.

"Our present education system is good for nothing," she said as we began our conversation on the small patio of her modest home in Ahmedabad. "The schools do not build character nor are they able to prepare the children for self-employment. Teachers should be sympathetic to children and teach them what is relevant. But what is the situation? The teaching is poor. Sometimes the teachers are not even present, especially in the farming season. For the development of the country, social values should be given to the children in school, and that is not done."

What social values?

"Work, discipline. Not to cut trees. Communal harmony. Equality. Bringing an end to untouchability.

"If I am a poor family," she continued, "but I am paid enough, then I will not want to send my child to work. I would send the child to school. If workers had more income child labor would decrease. But one point is left out. Schools do not prepare for careers. There are vendors whose sons have degrees, but their sons do not have jobs. The educational system has educated them to become clerks. We think that if we go to school we should have white-collar jobs. There is no regard for manual labor in our educational system. So these educated sons have become an antisocial element now.

"Our primary schools are worthless. The children do not learn. I see children in the municipal schools up to fourth standard and still they do not know how to write."

Why are the teachers unable to teach? I asked.

“That love for the children, that need to impart knowledge is not there. The teachers do not care. Sometimes there is rotten food in the lunch boxes the children bring to school and the teachers do nothing! It makes me so sad. It is not because teachers are badly paid. They get seven hundred to eight hundred rupees a month and the pay scales have gone up. The teachers are part of the lower middle class. They have an SLC pass [School Leaving Certificate] plus a diploma in teaching that they get after two years of study. Education is well paid now and the teachers are organized—but they do not teach. If we don’t respect them it is because we see them doing other business than teaching.”

[Myron Wiener, *The Child and the State in India: Child Labor and Education Policy in Comparative Perspective* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991), 56–59.]

PRIME MINISTER MANMOHAN SINGH: THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT OF CHILDREN TO ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, giving all children between the ages of six and fourteen the right to elementary education, was enacted by the Indian Parliament in August 2009 and came into effect on April 1, 2010. On that date Prime Minister Manmohan Singh addressed the nation, announcing the operationalization of the Fundamental Right to Education, as incorporated in the Indian Constitution under Article 21 A. The Act is intended to benefit the nearly 9 million children who have either dropped out of school or been deprived of prior education entirely. According to the act, it is binding on the local and state governments to ensure that all children have at least one trained teacher for every thirty students and that all schools have playgrounds and appropriate infrastructure. In addition, all private and minority elementary schools must reserve 25 percent of their seats for underprivileged children. As of 2010, the Centre and the States had agreed to share the financial burden in the ratio of 55:45.

About a hundred years ago a great son of India, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, urged the Imperial Legislative Assembly to confer on the Indian people the Right to Education. About ninety years later the Constitution of India was amended to enshrine the Right to Education as a fundamental right. Today, our Government comes before you to redeem the pledge of giving all our children the right to elementary education. . . .

We are a Nation of young people. The health, education and creative abilities of our children and young people will determine the wellbeing and strength of our Nation. . . .

To realise the Right to Education the government at the Centre, in the States and Union Territories, and at the district and village level must work together as part of a common national endeavour. I call upon all the State Governments to join in this national effort with full resolve and determina-

tion. Our government, in partnership with the State governments will ensure that financial constraints do not hamper the implementation of the Right to Education Act.

The success of any educational endeavour is based on the ability and motivation of teachers. The implementation of the Right to Education is no exception. I call upon all our teachers across the country to become partners in this effort. It is also incumbent upon all of us to work together to improve the working conditions of our teachers and enable them to teach with dignity, giving full expression to their talent and creativity.

Parents and guardians too have a critical role to play having been assigned school management responsibilities under the Act. The needs of every disadvantaged section of our society, particularly girls, dalits [former Untouchables], adivasis [tribal groups] and minorities must be of particular focus as we implement this Act.

I was born to a family of modest means. In my childhood I had to walk a long distance to go to school. I read under the dim light of a kerosene lamp. I am what I am today because of education. I want every Indian child, girl and boy, to be so touched by the light of education. I want every Indian to dream of a better future and live that dream. Let us together pledge this Act to the children of India. To our young men and women. To the future of our Nation.

[<http://www.pib.nic.in/release/release.asp?relid=60001>,
for Thursday, April 1, 2010.]

AMARTYA SEN: DEMOCRACY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Many economists were skeptical about democracy in India, arguing that a more authoritarian government worked better for a planned, industrial society. China and the Soviet Union were the examples often cited. Amartya Sen has frequently and eloquently argued the reverse: that democracy is best for India's economic development as well as human rights. Democracy encourages social welfare and also permits steps to be taken against the risks posed by globalization.

Born in 1933 and raised in Dhaka and Santiniketan, Tagore's school in West Bengal, Sen attended Presidency College, Calcutta, and later received his PhD in Economics from Cambridge University. He has taught at the Delhi School of Economics, the London School of Economics, and Oxford and Cambridge Universities, and is presently Thomas W. Lamont University Professor at Harvard University. A pioneer in social choice theory, a leader in the study of welfare economics and famines, and an advocate for the conjunction of economics and philosophy, Sen was awarded the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1998. He has helped to establish the United Nations Human Development Report as an annual snapshot of the progress of the world's nations in moving toward the well-being of their citizens. One of the world's foremost public intellectuals, Sen has continued to explore his Indian roots, even as he has taught for years in the West.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST POLITICAL FREEDOM AND CIVIL RIGHTS

The opposition to democracies and basic civil and political freedoms in developing countries comes from three different directions. First, there is the claim that these freedoms and rights hamper economic growth and development. . . .

Second, it has been argued that if poor people are given the choice between having political freedoms and fulfilling economic needs, they will invariably choose the latter. So there is, by this reasoning, a contradiction between the practice of democracy and its justification: to wit, the majority view would tend to reject democracy—given this choice. In a different but closely related variant of this argument, it is claimed that the real issue is not so much what people actually choose, but what they have *reason* to choose. Since people have reason to want to eliminate, first and foremost, economic deprivation and misery, they have reason enough for not insisting on political freedoms, which would get in the way of their real priorities. . . .

Third, it has often been argued that the emphasis on political freedom, liberties and democracy is a specifically “Western” priority, which goes, in particular, against “Asian values,” which are supposed to be more keen on order and discipline than on liberty and freedom. . . .

DEMOCRACY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Does authoritarianism really work so well? It is certainly true that some relatively authoritarian states (such as South Korea, Singapore and post-reform China) have had faster rates of economic growth than many less authoritarian ones (including India). But [this] thesis is, in fact, based on very selective and limited information, rather than on any general statistical testing over the wide-ranging data that are available. We cannot really take the high economic growth of China or South Korea in Asia as a definitive proof that authoritarianism does better in promoting economic growth. . . . Much depends on the precise circumstances.

Governmental response to the acute suffering of people often depends on the pressure that is put on the government, and this is where the exercise of political rights (voting, criticizing, protesting and so on) can make a real difference. This is a part of the “instrumental” role of democracy and political freedoms. . . .

DO POOR PEOPLE CARE ABOUT DEMOCRACY
AND POLITICAL RIGHTS?

I turn now to the second question. Are the citizens of third world countries indifferent to political and democratic rights? This claim, which is often made, is again based on too little empirical evidence. . . . The only way of verifying this

would be to put the matter to democratic testing in free elections with freedom of opposition and expression—precisely the things that the supporters of authoritarianism do not allow to happen. . . .

It is thus of some interest to note that when the Indian government, under Indira Gandhi's leadership, tried out a similar argument in India, to justify the "emergency" she had misguidedly declared in the mid-1970s, an election was called that divided the voters precisely on this issue. In that fateful election, fought largely on the acceptability of the "emergency," the suppression of basic political and civil rights was firmly rejected, and the Indian electorate—one of the poorest in the world—showed itself to be no less keen on protesting against the denial of basic liberties and rights than it was in complaining about economic poverty. To the extent that there has been any testing of the proposition that poor people in general do not care about civil and political rights, the evidence is entirely against that claim. . . .

INSTRUMENTAL IMPORTANCE OF POLITICAL FREEDOM

I turn now from the negative criticisms of political rights to their positive value. We have reason to value liberty and freedom of expression and action in our lives, and it is not unreasonable for human beings—the social creatures that we are—to value unrestrained participation in political and social activities. Also, informed and unregimented *formation* of our values requires openness of communication and arguments, and political freedoms and civil rights can be central for this process. Furthermore, to express publicly what we value and to demand that attention be paid to it, we need free speech and democratic choice.

When we move from the direct importance of political freedom to its instrumental role, we have to consider the political incentives that operate on governments and on the persons and groups that are in office. The rulers have the incentive to listen to what people want if they have to face their criticism and seek their support in elections. As was noted earlier, no substantial famine has ever occurred in any independent country with a democratic form of government and a relatively free press. Famines have occurred in ancient kingdoms and contemporary authoritarian societies, in primitive tribal communities and in modern technocratic dictatorships, in colonial economies run by imperialists from the north and in newly independent countries of the south run by despotic national leaders or by intolerant single parties. But they have never materialized in any country that is independent, that goes to elections regularly, that has opposition parties to voice criticisms and that permits newspapers to report freely and question the wisdom of government policies without extensive censorship. . . .

CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE OF POLITICAL FREEDOM

The instrumental roles of political freedoms and civil rights can be very substantial, but the connection between economic needs and political freedoms may have a *constructive* aspect as well. The exercise of basic political rights makes it more likely not only that there would be a policy response to economic needs, but also that the conceptualization—including comprehension—of “economic needs” itself may require the exercise of such rights. It can indeed be argued that a proper understanding of what economic needs are—their content and their force—requires discussion and exchange. Political and civil rights, especially those related to the guaranteeing of open discussion, debate, criticism, and dissent, are central to the processes of generating informed and reflected choices. These processes are crucial to the formation of values and priorities, and we cannot, in general, take preferences as given independently of public discussion, that is, irrespective of whether open debates and interchanges are permitted or not.

The reach and effectiveness of open dialogue are often underestimated in assessing social and political problems. For example, public discussion has an important role to play in reducing the high rates of fertility that characterize many developing countries. There is, in fact, much evidence that the sharp decline in fertility rates that has taken place in the more literate states in India has been much influenced by public discussion of the bad effects of high fertility rates especially on the lives of young women, and also on the community at large. If the view has emerged in, say, Kerala or Tamil Nadu that a happy family in the modern age is a small family, much discussion and debate have gone into the formation of these perspectives. Kerala now has a fertility rate of 1.7 (similar to that in Britain and France, and well below China’s 1.9), and this has been achieved with no coercion, but mainly through the emergence of new values—a process in which political and social dialogues have played a major part. . . .

THE PRACTICE OF DEMOCRACY AND THE ROLE OF OPPOSITION

. . . In fact, it can be argued that the contribution of democracy in India has not, by any means, been confined to the prevention of economic disasters, such as famines. Despite the limits of its practice, democracy has given India some stability and security about which many people were very pessimistic as the country became independent in 1947. India had, then, an untried government, an undigested partition and unclear political alignments, combined with widespread communal violence and social disorder. It was hard to have faith in the future of a united and democratic India. And yet half a century later we find a democracy that has, taking the rough with the smooth, worked fairly well. Political differences have largely been tackled within the constitutional procedures. Govern-

ments have risen and fallen according to electoral and parliamentary rules. India, an ungainly, unlikely, inelegant combination of differences, survives and functions remarkably well as a political unit with a democratic system—indeed held together by its working democracy. . . .

A CONCLUDING REMARK

Developing and strengthening a democratic system is an essential component of the process of development. The significance of democracy lies, I have argued, in three distinct virtues: (1) its *intrinsic importance*, (2) its *instrumental contributions*, and (3) its *constructive role* in the creation of values and norms. No evaluation of the democratic form of governance can be complete without considering each. . . .

However, while we must acknowledge the importance of democratic institutions, they cannot be viewed as mechanical devices for development. Their use is conditioned by our values and priorities, and by the use we make of the available opportunities of articulation and participation. The role of organized opposition groups is particularly important in this context. . . .

The achievement of social justice depends not only on institutional forms (including democratic rules and regulations), but also on effective practice. I have presented reasons for taking the issue of practice to be of central importance in the contributions that can be expected from civil rights and political freedoms. This is a challenge that is faced both by well-established democracies such as the United States (especially with the differential participation of diverse racial groups) and by newer democracies. There are shared problems as well as disparate ones.

[Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Knopf, 1999), 148–159.]

Sen also uses numerous studies to show the vital importance of female literacy in development.

Female literacy, in contrast, is found to have an unambiguous and statistically significant reducing impact on under-five mortality, even after controlling for male literacy. This is consistent with growing evidence of a close relationship between female literacy and child survival in many countries in the world, and particularly in intercountry comparisons. In this case, the impact of greater empowerment and agency [in the] role of women is not reduced in effectiveness by problems arising from inflexible male participation in child care and household work.

[Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 197.]

SOCIALISM, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND POVERTY

While there has been general agreement, both in India and abroad, that democracy has worked remarkably well in India, there has been far less agreement on socialism, another pillar of the Constitution's definition of Indian society. There has, however, been no attempt to amend the Preamble to the Constitution to remove "socialism" as a defining characteristic of Indian polity, no doubt because the term covers such a wide spectrum of concerns. Socialism in India has tended to link government planning and control of economic development with humanitarian concerns, so there has been much, often heated, discussion about whether socialism has promoted or hindered India's development. Such discussion has generally been concerned with praise or blame regarding what are often referred to as "Nehruvian policies." Socialism therefore becomes part of the whole national discourse on democracy, foreign policy, globalization, human rights, and secularism.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU'S VISION: SOCIALISM AND ITS ALTERNATIVES

Nehru dated his socialism from his living and traveling in Europe in his youth, and when he became general secretary of the India National Congress in 1923 he began to travel throughout India speaking on behalf of the Congress. From the beginning, he stressed the identity of political freedom, socialism, democracy, secularism, and a non-aligned foreign policy, all subsumed under his basic concern, the unity of India. Upon taking office Nehru moved to implement moderate socialist economic reforms by means of centralized economic planning. He personally presided over the government's Planning Commission, which drew up successive five-year plans, beginning in 1951, for the development of India's economy. In the decade and a half after Independence, these plans stressed industrial development and national ownership of several key areas of the economy. At the same time, capitalism went forward, with limitations, in India. Nehru also backed plans for community development projects and the creation of many educational institutions, especially ones that emphasized science and technology. Throughout the Nehru years, India's economy achieved steady growth and its agricultural production increased, though not as rapidly as many hoped. Nehru also encouraged the development of India's nuclear energy program.

As working General Secretary of the Congress, I was busy in looking after and strengthening its organisation, and I was particularly interested in directing people's attention to social and economic changes. . . . The burden of my speeches was always much the same. . . . Everywhere I spoke on political independence and social freedom and made the former a step towards the attainment

of the latter. I wanted to spread the ideology of socialism especially among Congress workers and the intelligentsia: for these people, who were the backbone of the national movement, thought largely in terms of the narrowest nationalism. Their speeches laid stress on the glories of old times; the injuries, material and spiritual, caused by alien rule; the sufferings of our people; the indignity of foreign domination over us and our national honour demanding that we should be free; the necessity for sacrifice at the altar of the motherland. . . . But though the truth in them remained, they seemed to grow a little thin and threadbare. . . . They only fostered emotion and did not encourage thought.

[Jawaharlal Nehru, *Toward Freedom: The Autobiography of Jawaharlal Nehru* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), 138.]

The Indian National Congress set up a National Planning Committee in 1938 at the behest of Congress president Subhas Chandra Bose, in preparation for the time when India would be independent. Here is Nehru's description of their hopes.

It was obvious that any comprehensive planning could only take place under a free national government, strong enough and popular enough to be in a position to introduce fundamental changes in the social and economic structure. Thus the attainment of national freedom and the elimination of foreign control became an essential prerequisite for planning. There were many other obstacles—our social backwardness, customs, traditional outlook, etc.—but they had in any event to be faced. . . .

The original idea behind the Planning Committee had been to further industrialization—"the problems of poverty and unemployment, of national defence and of economic regeneration in general cannot be solved without industrialization. As a step towards such industrialization, a comprehensive scheme of national planning should be formulated. This scheme should provide for the development of heavy key industries, medium scale industries and cottage industries. . . ." But no planning could possibly ignore agriculture, which was the mainstay of the people. Equally important were the social services. So one thing led to another, and it was impossible to isolate anything or to progress in one direction without corresponding progress in another. The more we thought of this planning business, the vaster it grew in its sweep and range, till it seemed to embrace almost every activity. That did not mean that we intended regulating and regimenting everything, but we had to keep almost everything in view even in deciding about one particular sector of the plan. The fascination of this work grew upon me, and, I think, upon the other members of our committee also. But at the same time a certain vagueness and indefiniteness crept in; instead of concentrating on some major aspects of the plan we tended to become diffuse. This also led to delay in the work of many of our subcommittees which lacked the sense of urgency and of working for a definite objective within a stated time. . . .

The objective for the country as a whole was the attainment, as far as possible, of national self-sufficiency. International trade was certainly not excluded, but we were anxious to avoid being drawn into the whirlpool of economic imperialism.

[Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (New York: John Day, 1946), 400–403.]

GOVERNMENT ACTION: THE FIRST FIVE-YEAR PLAN, 1952

Twelve years after the Indian National Congress had set up its Planning Committee in 1938, a Planning Commission was established in 1950 in independent India, and the first Five-Year Plan was prepared. While there were to be other Five-Year Plans, none of them elicited as much interest as this first one. It was published in 1952, and the selections given here clearly reflect Nehru's thinking. Details of implementation were worked out as the plan developed. The ideas expressed here guided the country in some fashion until 1990, when there was a deliberate movement away from planning toward a freer economy.

Introduction: The Planning Commission was set up in March, 1950 by a Resolution of the Government of India which defined the scope of its work in the following terms:

The Constitution of India has guaranteed certain Fundamental Rights to the citizens of India and enunciated certain Directive Principles of State Policy, in particular, that the State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of the national life, and shall direct its policy towards securing, among other things,—(a) that the citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood; (b) that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good; and (c) that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment. . . .

The Planning Commission will—(1) make an assessment of the material, capital and human resources of the country, including technical personnel, and investigate the possibilities of augmenting such of these resources as are found to be deficient in relation to the nation's requirements; (2) formulate a Plan for the most effective and balanced utilisation of the country's resources; [and] (3) on a determination of priorities, define the stages in which the Plan should be carried out and propose the allocation of resources for the due completion of each stage. . . .

PLANNING: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ASPECTS

1. The . . . economic condition of a country at any given time is a product of the broader social environment, and economic planning has to be viewed as an integral part of a wider process aiming not merely at the development of resources in a narrow technical sense, but at the development of human faculties and the building up of an institutional framework adequate to the needs and aspirations of the people.

2. . . . In planning for a better economic order, the close interrelation between the technical and social aspects of the process of development has to be continually kept in view. While there is need for concentrating effort on the more immediate problems, planning implies the readiness on the part of the community to view the social process as one whole and to take action designed to shape this process along desired lines over a defined period.

3. . . . Planning is essentially an attempt at working out a rational solution of problems, an attempt to co-ordinate means and ends; it is thus different from the traditional hit-and-miss methods by which “reforms” and “reconstruction” are often undertaken. A planned economy has inevitably in view a somewhat wider time-horizon, to which the day-to-day decisions have to be related. . . . We cannot always say for certain that a given set of causes will produce a particular, clearly definable, set of results and none other; we do not always know at what rate the effects of a particular change in a part of the system will be transmitted to the other parts of the system. . . .

4. The urge to economic and social change under present conditions comes from the fact of poverty and of inequalities in income, wealth and opportunity. The elimination of poverty cannot, obviously, be achieved merely by redistributing existing wealth. Nor can a programme aiming only at raising production remove existing inequalities. The two have to be considered together. . . .

5. . . . The modern world is changing so rapidly that it is not enough to think in terms of slow changes and marginal adjustments, a minor shake-up here and a little cementing elsewhere. An underdeveloped country which has suffered long from the effects of cramped development desires inevitably to progress rapidly and in many directions; the aim of planning must be to make this possible. . . .

6. The rapid advances in science and technology over the last few decades have opened out new possibilities in the direction of abolition of want and the restoration of man to a new sense of dignity, but they also carry potentialities of harm and danger. . . . All that can be said is that there is need, on the one hand, for clarity in regard to basic values and, on the other, for readiness to adapt practical solutions to the concrete problems arising in the process of transition to a different economic and social order.

7. We should like in this context to stress the essential political and administrative conditions essential to successful planning. Briefly these are: (a) a large measure of agreement in the community as to the ends of policy; (b) effective power,

based on the active co-operation of citizens, in the hands of the State; and, earnest and determined exercise of that power in furtherance of these ends; and (c) an efficient administrative set-up, with personnel of requisite capacity and quality. . . .

11. A planned economy aiming at the realisation of larger social objectives entails a vast increase in governmental functions. . . . For these to be discharged efficiently, appropriate local, regional and functional organisations have to be built up and strengthened. . . .

13. In the last four or five decades, there has been considerable industrial development in India, accompanied by urbanisation and expansion of commerce. . . . But, for the community as a whole, the economic development of the last few decades has brought no significant improvement in standards of living and opportunities for employment, and has perhaps accentuated to some extent inequalities of income and wealth.

15. These are aspects of the problem of economic development which have to be constantly kept in view. Given these basic conditions of rapid and sustained progress, institutional as well as others, the key to higher productivity and expanding levels of income and employment lies really in stepping up the rate of capital formation. The level of production and the material well-being a community can attain depends, in the main, on the stock of capital at its disposal. . . . The larger the stock of capital, the greater tends to be the productivity of labour and therefore the volume of commodities and services that can be turned out with the same effort. The productivity of the economy depends on other things also, as for instance the technical efficiency and attitude to work of the labour that handles the available capital equipment.

[*The First Five Year Plan* (New Delhi: Government of India, 1953), 7–13.]

KAMALADEVI CHATTOPADHYAYA: THE FUSION OF SOCIALISM, NATIONALISM, AND ART

Kamaladevi Chattapodhyaya (1903–1988) has a special place in the history of the making of modern India because her sensitive and imaginative intelligence was linked with an exuberant energy that made it possible, through her extraordinary range of friends in politics, literature, painting, sculpture, and dance, to add the vital element of artistic creativity to the nationalist project. Central to all this was her conviction that what are usually referred to as “local handicrafts” were essential elements in what she called the beauty and totality of Indian life.

Her own life was an expression of that totality. Married at fourteen and widowed two years later, she defied many aspects of Indian convention. She acted on the stage, although acting was not a reputable occupation for women of her class, and also broke convention by remarrying. She and her husband went to England to study, but returned in 1923 to join Mahatma Gandhi’s non-cooperation movement. She soon became deeply involved in the Socialist Party that was taking shape within the Indian

National Congress, and in 1936 she became its president. Influenced by Gandhi, she became convinced that industrialization as supported by Nehru might destroy the local handmade articles that were the staple of most households, and which she saw as expressions of the innate creativity of the people. She encouraged the founding of museums for preserving folk art from all over the country, of a school of drama, and of a dance academy. Most important perhaps was the setting up of the All-India Handicrafts Board and what became one of the most famous centers in India, the Central Cottage Industries Emporium in Delhi.

The handicrafts in this country were in a manner revered as an important part of our rich cultural heritage. . . . For though handicrafts fulfilled a positive physical need in the daily requirements of the people, they also served to satisfy the aesthetic hunger in man and provided a vehicle for his urge for self-expression which reveals a conscious aesthetic approach. . . . The concept behind handicrafts as originally conceived was imbuing everything used in daily life, no matter how common or mundane, with a touch of beauty to add brightness to an otherwise dull and drab existence. . . . The handicrafts have now got partially submerged under the rising forces of modern industrialization with its high mechanization and lost their basic role in the overall perspective. We are losing not only an ancient heritage but a more essential element in our social composition which has been a strong cementing force. It is not surprising that we are being torn apart and our very foundations are weakening.

What is the real significance of Handicrafts? It lies in the newness and surprise of each object. No two are alike, for each is a fresh creation. Standardisation is alien, in fact a negation of all that handicrafts stand for. Even the poorest enjoyed a variety in the articles of everyday use, for a special article was assigned for a particular use. This meant a wide range even in the clay water pots and pans, clothes and garments with distinctive colours and designs. Wall and floor decorations varied according to the days of the week and to mark special festivals. All this broke monotony which is perhaps the most deadening element in life. In an age of machine-tooled monotony, the handicrafts stand as symbols of a ceaseless flow of creativity instead of dull repetition. . . . Complicated and elaborate techniques evolved over the ages to produce imaginative effects are being lightly discarded and bland ones are wrought to speed up to gain time. There is no motive here, except cash profit.

[Kamaladevi Chattopodhyaya, *The Glory of Indian Handicrafts*
(New Delhi: Indian Book Company, 1976), 7–8.]

JAGDISH BHAGWATI: THE RESULTS OF GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF THE ECONOMY

While many Indian intellectuals supported “Nehruvian” economic and social politics, some of them were trenchant critics. Among the most famous of these is Jagdish

Bhagwati (b. 1934), professor of economics at Columbia University, who earned an undergraduate degree at St. John's College, Cambridge, about the same time as Sen took his degree from Trinity College, Cambridge. They were fellow faculty members at the Delhi School of Economics in the 1960s, but ultimately came to very different conclusions about socialism and the free market. Bhagwati argues that socialism, as exemplified by the Five-Year Plans, limited foreign investment and prevented competition, whereas trade enhances growth and reduces poverty. He writes as an insider, having been involved in research for the First Five-Year Plan and then later as an adviser to the government of India in urging the liberalization of trade and the freeing of the economy from controls after 1991.

In India, the public sector is truly substantial. From the beginning, no doubt as a consequence of the influence of socialist doctrines on Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and indeed on many of us who studied Economics at Cambridge and Politics at the London School of Economics, the public sector was considered to be an important sector to cultivate and enlarge. Fabianism, with its anti-revolutionary thrust, probably helped define a policy of gradualism: nationalizations were not contemplated but it was expected instead that increasing shares of investment in the public sector over successive Five-Year Plans would steadily increase the average size of the public sector to a decisive share in the nation's capital stock. A measured and slow-paced ascent up the Marxist mountain was therefore part of the ideological agenda.

In turn, the two Industrial Policy Resolutions of 1948 and 1956 shifted a number of industries to the exclusive domain of the public sector. Thus the 1956 Resolution [on the Five-Year Plans] stated:

In the first category there will be industries the future development of which will be the exclusive responsibility of the state. The second category will consist of industries, which will be progressively state-owned and in which the state will therefore generally take the initiative in establishing new undertakings, but in which private enterprise will also be expected to supplement the effort of the state. The third category will include all the remaining industries, and their future development will, in general, be left to the initiative and enterprise of the private sector.

The first category turned out to be an enormous one, embracing not merely defence-related industries but also atomic energy, iron and steel, heavy machinery, coal, railways and airlines, telecommunications, and the generation and distribution of electricity. These industries provide the bulk of the infrastructure of the country; their inefficiency could thus, in turn, create inefficiencies in the user-industries in the private sector. It did, as I argue presently.

In fact, the overwhelming presence of the public sector in India must be spelled out to see why the matter of its functioning is of great importance to In-

dian productivity and economic performance. Thus, the 244 economic enterprises of the central government alone, excluding the railways and the utilities, employed as many as 2.3 million workers in 1990. In manufacturing, if the small “unorganized” sector is excluded, their employment was over 40 per cent of that provided by the private-sector firms. In fact, the public-sector enterprises in manufacturing, mining, construction, transport and communications, banking and insurance (both now nationalized, partly and wholly respectively), when state-level enterprises are counted in, provided nearly 70 per cent of the 26 million jobs in the large-scale “organized” sector in 1989.

Not merely because of its size, but also, as I have just noted, because of its composition, which is such that it can affect the supply of important productive inputs such as electricity, transportation, finance, insurance, and steel, and hence influence the efficiency of the private sector, the public sector must be efficient. But, as virtually everywhere to some degree or the other, this has not been the case in India either.

Overstaffing due to politics, the “goofing-off” effect of soft budget restraints, have been amply documented by a series of investigations. I must confess that I was among the many who thought in the 1950s and 1960s that the public-sector enterprises could be operated better. . . . In reality, the conditions that would make the public-sector productive and efficient seem beyond reach, at least in India.

This inefficiency, directly observed and documented, is not the only cause of public-sector losses, and some of the losses are attributable also to a governmental policy of taking over so-called “sick units” (i.e., private firms making losses) to respond to political demands for the avoidance of bankruptcy. It is noteworthy, however, that the public-sector enterprises have as a rule produced abysmally low returns on the enormous amounts of employed capital. Thus, even during the decade of the 1980s, when the awareness of the issue was keen, the (simple) average rate of financial return on employed capital was 2.5 per cent! And that too was heavily weighted by the profits of 14 petroleum enterprises which produced as much as 77 per cent of the 1989–90 profits. Besides, even this meagre profitability was ephemeral, based on historical-cost depreciation: corrected for replacement cost, the profits in public-sector enterprises in coal, steel, fertilizer, power, and transport were even estimated to be negative. . . .

It is important to recognize that the reforms are not a return to *laissez-faire*. They seek instead to move the government from counter-productive to productive intervention. There are plenty of things for the government to do, as both Indian intellectuals and masses appreciate and indeed as Adam Smith himself recognized ([in his] support of a governmental role in providing elementary education to offset the deleterious effects of the division of labour on the labouring classes).

The energy, talents, and worldly ambitions of India’s many millions, captured so well in V. S. Naipaul’s latest work (*India: A Million Mutinies Now*, 1990) that

moves him from his earlier cynicism to great optimism, need merely an appropriate policy framework to produce the economic magic that Jawaharlal Nehru wished for his compatriots but which, like many well-meaning intellectuals of his time, he mistakenly sought in now discredited economic doctrines. We finally have this elusive policy framework within our grasp.

[Jagdish Bhagwati, *India in Transition: Freeing the Economy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 62–65, 98.]

NANDAN NILEKANI: INDIA ENTERING A NEW ERA OF GROWTH

Nandan Nilekani has been a leader of Infosys Technologies and a spokesman for Indian industries worldwide. Born in Bangalore in 1955 and educated there and later at the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, he worked for Patni Computer Systems, in Bombay, upon graduation. In 1981 he decided to join N. R. Narayana Murthy at Infosys, a leader in software development and outsourcing from Western countries. Nilekani became the chief executive officer of Infosys in 2002, taking over from Murthy, and remained there until 2009, when he left to serve as the chairperson of the Unique Identification Authority of India, with the rank of a cabinet minister, upon invitation from the prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh.

Nilekani's book on India's economic rise in the last two decades, *Imagining India*, was published in 2009, and the selections below are drawn from its conclusions, subtitled "The Awakened Country."

In the 1960s an Indian bureaucrat put the blame for the country's economic failures on our climate, which he said exhausted us and made us incapable of working. "Our people are frail," he lamented. As it turned out, nothing could have been further from the truth. It is precisely India's strength in human capital that has spurred our economic transformation since the 1980s, even as we battled daunting infrastructure challenges, capital inefficiencies and land shortages.

I remember Sam Pitroda telling me that between the time he left India and came back, thirteen years later, in 2004, it had turned into a different country. "I left a little after Rajiv Gandhi was killed," he said. "I had liked him a great deal, and I lost heart when it happened." When he returned, he was astonished. In the decade that he had missed, entrepreneurs, civil activists and reformists in the government had remade India's identity. "So much had changed, especially our sense of confidence," said Sam. "There was this new belief among people that they could be successful and that there were opportunities here for the taking."

Freed from the oppressive weight of the control raj, India has revealed itself to be a keen, chaotic and incredibly entrepreneurial economy. And entrepreneurship here has been as much about Tata, Reliance Industries and Ranbaxy,

with their global focus and markets, as about the small business-person setting up her stall in a street corner, all her savings invested in her dream of achieving success. This is what is unique about the Indian growth story. A transformation of a country holds a particular power; it is irreversible. As Shankar Acharya said to me, “You can’t bottle up India’s economy again. No matter the uncertainties and challenges of our growth, the Indian people are not going to cede the economic ground they have gained back to the state.”

During my research for this book, I would occasionally run into economists or analysts who argued that India, in retrospect, had not done all that badly even in the first decades after independence. They pointed to the early growth numbers of the 1950s as proof and to our healthy GDP in the non-crisis years. But looking back, it is clear that the difference between the periods before and after the mid-1980s is not about the average GDP. The problems of our past lay in the sudden, sharp slide in our growth rates every time the country faced a crisis—the death of a political leader, for instance, or a spike in oil prices. Each such slump was a failure of our state-controlled economy, which tried to direct the traffic of capital and labor into areas that our governments and planners judged essential.

No plan in India, however visionary, was able to achieve what bottom-up economic power and initiative have enabled in the last two decades. Instead, it was Indian citizens who embraced new ideas for development and became the main impetus of our trajectory toward sustained growth. Since the time people were allowed to make the majority of decisions on investment and enterprise, India’s markets have followed economic demand quite naturally, encouraging innovation and limiting the kind of bad decisions that dominated our first forty years and led to chronic shortages and emergency aid.

Indian firms, big and small, are innovating in business models and in products in a way that will have a greater impact on economic growth than routine increases in capital and labor utilization. For instance, the inexpensive solar lamps SELCO offers people in villages without electricity help shops to stay open longer and children to study after sundown. The community IT kiosks that businesses have opened in villages are becoming a way for people in the countryside to connect to India’s urban markets. The manner in which businesses are targeting consumers—with the Tata Nano car as well as the Honda City and Blackberrys and hundred-rupee mobile phones, one-rupee shampoo packets as well as high-end consumer products—points to a market that is expanding and touching an incredibly broad base of Indians.

The diversity in our markets has spilled over into the realm of ideas. V. S. Naipaul once described Indians as “a people grown barbarous, indifferent and self-wounding.” We appalled him. Today, even that famously provocative, curmudgeonly uncle has revised his opinion. Ordinary people now have more influence than ever before in shaping Indian attitudes toward a variety of issues—from infrastructure and the nature of our cities to our education system and the role of the English language. In this sense, the impact of India’s reforms process

has not been limited to the economic sphere alone. Its language has been a much broader one, of empowerment.

Indians are now keenly following and participating in a variety of debates, and we are arguing about markets, politics and governance in a manner I have never seen before. Our discussions have become not just spontaneous but—and there is no other word for it—raucous. An explosion of new media has accompanied this urge for public analysis and debate, and we now have more than two hundred television channels, with more than forty channels for news alone. We are a country with a vibrant public square lit up by camera flashbulbs, our chatter caught by a blur of microphones. . . .

We are closer today than we have ever been to a truly effective “deliberative democracy,” where individuals and groups across the country are chipping away at the once absolute power of the state. We are shifting away from the “cathedral model” of growth, with its closed, top-down influence, to the “bazaar model”—an open-source model of development. . . .

Implementation, sadly, has long been India’s weak spot, especially where government responsibility is divided and where issues end up orphaned, owned by no one. Primary education, where the onus is shared by the central, state and local governments, has been a regular victim of budget cuts thanks to straitened funds on every side and a refusal by any of the governments to take complete charge and responsibility. Infrastructure, spread across multiple ministries at the center, has long lacked a cohesive vision, as well as budget priority. And when new ideas have challenged existing political equations, such as efforts aimed at empowering local government, it has led to the ouster of reformist ministers and bureaucrats. . . .

Our pre-reform, but still persistent, perception of the state as the “giver and taker of all” has doomed many of our most urgent policy proposals. I think that the single reform that will change this is bringing direct benefits into our welfare system. With health and education vouchers, citizens can choose between private- and public-sector alternatives. These and similar vouchers for essential commodities will free the poor of the middleman in India’s public distribution system and from the tyranny of the bureaucracy. Putting benefits such as cash in the hands of the poor, which would in turn allow them to participate in markets more effectively, can also rid us of the confrontational relationship that now exists between the government and markets.

An equally urgent and far-reaching reform is that of decentralizing our governance. The difference between the Indian state in imagination and in action has been enormous, and a big reason for this is that an impenetrable bureaucracy protects the elected minister from the often spiky concerns of citizens. . . .

Ensuring growth in today’s competitive, interactive dynamic also requires us all—our governments and big business, most of all—to commit to transparency and efficiency like never before. This has become particularly critical after we linked ourselves closely with the global market. We need economic and fiscal

discipline to manage the trinity of exchange rates, interest rates and free capital movements. . . .

Our entrepreneurs too have to realize that their role in nation-building and public welfare is critical. Our reforms have distributed not just economic power and the burdens of growth, but also the burdens of equity and development. This is a contract that entrepreneurs have taken up across the world. . . .

It is not as if the idea is entirely new to India. Some of our entrepreneurs have had a rich history of philanthropy, and their contributions have built some of India's most iconic institutions—the Indian Institute of Science, funded by Jamsetji Tata; the Birla Institute of Technology and Science, founded by G. D. Birla; the Mahim Causeway, linking Mahim to Salsette, funded by a donation from Lady Avia Jeejeebhoy. These early examples ought to serve as guiding lights for today's Indian entrepreneurs. In a country with vast numbers of poor, this is a necessary investment for sustaining India's growth. It is also, of course, crucial for the widespread acceptance of our reforms.

[Nandan Nilekani, *Imagining India: The Idea of a Renewed Nation* (New York: Penguin, 2009), 452–458.]

MIRA KAMDAR: SOME DESPAIR ON PLANET INDIA

Although based in the United States, novelist and journalist Mira Kamdar has an intense interest in her Indian roots. In 2007 she published *Planet India*, an account of India's economic rise on the world scene, but also of the attendant challenges. Some of the accomplishments of India since the reforms of the early 1990s have been noted in the selections above; here, by contrast, we find Kamdar's vivid descriptions of the problems and dangers confronting Indian peasant farmers, as well as the path of suicide that some of them have taken in their despair.

Last April, at the height of the dry season, as reports of suicides by farmers in Vidarbha, a region in eastern Maharashtra, were hitting the Indian press weekly, I got a call from an old journalist friend of mine in Bombay, Dilip D'Souza. He invited me to join him on a trip he was planning to visit villages where farmers were committing suicide. A couple of weeks later, I was on an overnight train from Bombay to Nagpur, the nearest major city to the villages in Vidarbha we wanted to visit. . . .

While India's educated urban elite and large landowners are enjoying the country's economic boom, millions of Indian farming families are struggling. The government has ended some price supports, rains have failed or been erratic, water tables have dropped, and wells have gone dry. These problems are familiar to American farmers, but most get more government support than Indian farmers, and when all else fails, chances are American farmers can get a job off the farm. Indian farmers aren't so lucky. In an effort to survive, farmers

borrow money at usurious rates to purchase expensive new hybrid and genetically engineered seeds, synthetic fertilizers, and pesticides. To get the cash they need to repay these debts, they shift production even further from subsistence farming to cash crops. When these fail, they have no way to pay back their debts, and no food either. These factors have conspired to make the future of thousands of Indian farmers so grim, they exert the only power they have left over their fate: they kill themselves.

Since 1997, more than twenty-five thousand Indian farmers have committed suicide. This grim number is directly linked to changes in India's agricultural policy, a lack of legitimate credit opportunities that drives farmers to borrow from rapacious moneylenders, and a serious water crisis. The worst-hit states are Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Maharashtra. Ironically, these are states where urban centers have flourished during the same period: Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh, Bangalore in Karnataka, Trivandrum in Kerala, and Bombay in Maharashtra. . . .

Outside the small city of Akola, we found ourselves in the village of Dadham, a typical assemblage of ramshackle houses, some made of local materials of wattle and daub topped by tile roofs, and some simple concrete, one-room boxes. None of the lanes in the village were paved, and waste water ran in rivulets wherever gravity pulled it, sometimes along the edge of the lanes but more often snaking around the middle. Semiferal dogs napped in the shade, pigs rooted in the muck, and cows were tethered under scrubby acacia trees. The village leaders came out and ushered us toward the Gram Panchayat office. We got a ready reception from these villagers. The situation of farmers in this area is grim. The arrival of a journalist from Bombay and a foreign writer meant only one thing to these people: surely, we were there to help.

The Gram Panchayat is the village-level governance body. Every village in India has a Panchayat or five-member board that decides local matters and receives government funds allocated to the village. The Gram Panchayat office in Dadham is typical: a single-room, concrete box with open windows protected by iron bars, adorned by a collection of old pictures hung just below the ceiling. There are national and regional heroes: Gandhi, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Rajiv Gandhi, Shivaji, Ambedkar, and, the most recent, Indira Gandhi, assassinated in 1984. Behind Bose's head, a sparrow was busy renovating its nest. There were also two holy figures: Sai Baba and the Buddha.

Dadham, like nearly all the villages we visited, is a village of Dalits or untouchables, the lowest social stratum in India's rigid hierarchy of caste. . . . When we asked villagers what their religion was, they inevitably replied "Buddhist," a religion to which Ambedkar, the great leader of India's untouchables and the first president of India, converted in order to escape India's brutal caste hierarchy. Instead of a Hindu temple or a Muslim mosque, these villages had life-size or larger-than-life-size statues of Ambedkar standing smiling in a robin's-egg-blue Western suit wearing a pair of black-rimmed eyeglasses. A

couple of village elders and a half dozen young men hurriedly assembled in the Panchayat office. . . . The men told us their story.

Premchand Pandurang Kule was twenty-two or twenty-three years old when killed himself by drinking liquid pesticide. His father was infected with leprosy and had given over his farm of two acres to Premchand. With only that much land, which he planted in cotton, the family could hardly survive. Premchand's father needed medicine and Premchand had no money, so, like several other people in the village and millions of poor people across India, Premchand borrowed two thousand rupees (about \$45) from a private moneylender. The moneylender, Bhandu Wakhare, lived in Akola. Several people in the village owed him money, and he came around regularly, always in the company of a couple of strong-arms, to collect on his loans. Wakhare charged 10 percent interest—per week. In the beginning, Premchand could pay him the interest, but soon he fell behind, and as his debt soared, any hope of paying it off was lost.

Wakhare terrified the village, striding in as if he owned the place, bursting into homes, beating people up. "People were very afraid," one of the men told us. "They would run away and hide until he left. He used to take people to his house in Akola and beat them up there too." One day, Premchand witnessed a brutal beating of another villager who owed Wakhare money. He was so scared, he "went out to the jungle and took poison," the men said. He then dragged himself back to the village and died a torturous death. Premchand was married and had a one-year-old son.

When Wakhare discovered his prey had killed himself, he became enraged. He stormed into the village, breaking down doors, bellowing, going into other debtors' houses and verbally abusing their wives. He went out to Premchand's fields, found his wife and mother working there. He beat Premchand's mother so savagely he broke her thigh. He told her when he was done, "If you run away, I will rape your daughter." He stomped back into the village, destroyed the family's chicken coop, and smashed up a motorcycle. Then he left.

Wakhare had gone too far. The villagers were incensed. They forgot their fear and vowed to stop Wakhare from terrifying them. That afternoon, Wakhare returned. He was drunk, and so cocky he'd come without his bodyguards. The men in the village surrounded him and beat him to death with lathis (long batons used all over India even by police to beat people). The villagers called the police at four the afternoon, but the police didn't come until 9 p.m. The villagers were surprised it took the police so long. In the past when they had called them during Wakhare's rampages, the police hadn't responded at all. The villagers reported they had heard Wakhare saying on his mobile phone, "Shut up. Don't interfere. You're getting your fifty thousand."

When the police finally showed up, they asked who was responsible for Wakhare's murder. No one would say anything. Instead, the villagers told the police about all the bad things Wakhare had done to them. Then, one man stepped forward and said, "I did it"; then another. One after another, each man said, "I did

it." The village *patil* or headman said, "Wakhare harassed many people in the village. He also abused these five men." The police promptly took the five into custody along with Premchand's old mother-in-law, accusing them of the murder. In a practice typical in India, the police gathered written witness reports from people outside the village who weren't anywhere near the scene of the crime. Wakhare's father came and verbally abused the villagers, promising revenge.

When the case came up for trial, every man in the village again testified that it was he who had murdered Wakhare. The judge acquitted the five accused and threw out the case. After the trial, the police came to the village and told the men, "What we could not do, you have done." The villagers of Dadham heard that when Wakhare's neighbors in Akola learned he'd been killed, they handed out sweets in the streets.

We visited several other villages. The spectacle of dire poverty was evident everywhere: barefoot children in rags with matted hair, open sewers, broken-down string beds shared by whole families, thin, filthy old quilts, crumbling walls draped with plastic tarps. People were barely hanging on. They begged us to help them. Could we get someone in the family a job? Could we help speed up a government pay-out? Could we get them a loan?

In the village of Barshi Takli, we entered a broken-down hovel half-open to the elements with a dirt floor and no furniture other than two old cots. Seated on one of them, a mother cried for her twenty-year-old son. "He had completed seventh standard. He was a karate champion at his school," she croaked. She showed us a photograph of her smooth-faced boy, now gone forever. I couldn't help thinking of my own teenage son, and my heart tightened. "We have three and a half acres. We planted them in sugarcane. The rains failed, and the plants dried up," she explained, tears running down her cheeks. We asked her if they had a well for irrigation. "We have a well," she replied, "but it has gone dry." Like everyone else, they'd borrowed money and couldn't pay back their loans. "We rushed him to the hospital and they tried so hard to save him. They tried. The doctor was a good man, but he couldn't save my son," she sobbed, pressing her *dupatta* to her face. I gave this woman some money. I felt so helpless before her grief, her destitution. I knew it would only help her for a couple of weeks, maybe a month, but it was what I could do then and there. . . .

On June 30, 2006, Manmohan Singh visited Vidarbha. The crisis of farmer suicides had become a big national news story, with fresh deaths reported at least weekly. Addressing suffering farmers, the prime minister assured them, "I have come here to know your plight. I know what pain you are going through. I will see what needs to be done to prevent such a crisis in the future." Mr. Singh promised that all interest due on bank loans would be forgiven in the six worst-hit districts, making farmers eligible for new loans. He pledged to allocate funds for immediate emergency relief, and to investigate why irrigation projects had not been implemented. He also said he "was aware of the need to move

away from cash crops” and promised help to generate parallel income streams for farmers.

[Mira Kamdar, *Planet India: How the Fastest-Growing Democracy Is Transforming the World* (New York: Scribner, 2007), 143, 147–153, 160.]

TOWARD EQUALITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Perhaps the issues that have most galvanized post-Independence activism in India concern poverty and property inequities, the relationship between state projects and individual rights, caste discrimination, the status of women, and the condition of minorities, especially Muslims. Successive governments have ordered commissions to report on various of these social problems, and in each case the reports have mandated change, with varying levels of subsequent achievement. In addition, besides the regional demands for autonomy and even independence, as explained above, there have been other political and social movements dedicated to improving and transforming rural society, some of which—those in Telangana and North Bengal—have resulted in violent rebellions against state power. As a whole, this section of our chapter demonstrates through individualized histories both the pathos of personal suffering and the powerful resistance to change.

VINOBA BHAVE: GET RID OF INSTITUTIONS

Vinoba Bhave (1895–1982) rejected both socialist and free market solutions. He became a follower of Mahatma Gandhi in 1916 at the very beginning of Gandhi’s career in India. Bhave participated in many of the civil disobedience campaigns, and was active in the movement in South India to allow Untouchables to enter Hindu temples. Gandhi was so impressed by him that he chose him to be the first participant in the non-violent campaign of 1940. After Gandhi’s assassination Bhave began a great campaign, walking throughout India to persuade landowners to give land to landless peasants in what was known as the Bhudan (land-gift) Movement, which was part of his welfare organization, Sarvodaya Samaj. He was given hundreds of thousands of acres, exciting great interest in him as the successor to Gandhi, but he did not have a good support organization—for the reasons he explains below—to handle the gifts, and the movement faded out. His rejection of both religious and secular institutions was an expression of his rigorous interpretation of Gandhian principles—although Gandhi, by contrast, was a great organizer. He also lost support because he backed Indira Gandhi’s declaration of the Emergency, believing it was a call to discipline. He ended his life in 1982 by deciding to fast to death.

The strongest institutions in the world today are of two types: religious, and governmental. Both have as their objective public service. Society felt the need

for both types and is still using them. At the time they were formed, society recognized them to be essential, and found them useful.

But as things are today it is necessary that society should be set free from both these types of institution. I do not mean that we need to get rid of religion; that is *not* what I am saying. What I do say is that we need to get rid of religious institutions. I do not mean, either, that there should be no orderly provision for the public welfare, but I do say that we need to get rid of institutions which exercise authority in the name of service. The more I think about it, the more I am convinced that although both the political and the religious institutions were founded for good purposes, those purposes have now been fulfilled, and it will do no good, but only harm, to allow them to exist any longer.

We live in an age of expanding science, an age also which inherits the traditions of a thousand years of wisdom. We ought to be able to see that in such times it is right and proper for every man to take charge of his own affairs, both in matters of knowledge and in matters of religion. It is quite wrong that a few people should be able to confer favours, and that the rest should be burdened by those favours. It is of course proper that parents should be responsible for little children. But are we children still after thousands of years of these institutions?

My chief criticism of the system is this: that the good work which is done by government services is very far from good in its effect upon the minds of the people. When the elections take place, the government party is going to ask for your votes because of all the good work they have done. If it is true that they have done good work, the people will be oppressed by the sheer weight of their charity—and that is exactly what saddens me. Some people ask why I do not protest strongly when the government does something wrong. It is true that I do not make such protests, though I may raise the subject if occasion offers. But I do raise my voice when the government does something good. There is no need for me to protest against the government's faults, it is against its good deeds that my protests are needed. I have to tell the people what sheep they are. Is it a matter for rejoicing if you all turn into sheep and tell me how well the shepherds look after you? What am I to say? It seems to me that it would be better if the shepherds neglected their duty—the sheep would then at least realise that they *are* sheep. They might then come to their senses and remember that they are after all not sheep but men—men capable of managing their own affairs.

That is why my voice is raised in opposition to good government. Bad government has been condemned long ago by Vyasa in the Mahabharata. People know very well that bad government should not be allowed, and everywhere they protest against it. But what seems to me to be wrong is that we should allow ourselves to be governed at all, even by a good government.

I am continually urging that believers in non-violence should use their strength to establish *lok-niti*—government by the people: in other words to put an end to *raj-niti*—government by politicians. “Raj” and “niti” are words which embody mutually contradictory ideas, they cancel each other out. Where *niti*,

the moral law, rules, government disintegrates; where there is a *raj*, a coercive government, *niti* is destroyed. For the future, we want not a *kingdom*, ruled by political “kings”, but a *common-wealth*, ordered by the “common” people. I do not know how long it will take to bring this about, but if any work is worth doing, this is, and the Sarvodaya Samaj should be giving itself singlemindedly to this task.

Many of Gandhiji’s old fellow-workers, however, suffer from the illusion that the responsibilities of government are and must remain theirs. I agree with them that there would have been no point in struggling for self-government if we had not been ready for the responsibilities of self-government. We certainly had to take over power, but our purpose in doing so was to begin, from the very first, the process of dissolving power. That process may well take us fifty years, but a beginning at least must be made today. . . .

The best kind of government is one where it is possible to doubt whether any government exists at all. On this principle, we ought not to be aware of whether there is any government in Delhi or not. We ourselves should be seeing to the affairs of our own villages, instead of doing just the opposite, and handing over all power to the Centre. Any Central authority ought to model itself upon the divine government—unseen, unfelt, decentralised. How many hours a day does God have to work to run the world?—Hindus will tell you that He does not work at all, He is asleep in the Kshir-sagar [the ocean of milk]. The meaning of this is that government is not an activity, it is a thought: “it is thought that makes the world go round.” The less the activity, the better the government. An ideal government would have no armaments, no police force and no penalties; the people would manage their own affairs, listen readily to advice, and allow themselves to be guided by moral considerations. . . .

The Five Year Plan of the government envisages an expenditure of four or five thousand crores of rupees altogether, that is to say about a thousand crores a year or eighty crores a month. This works out at about two rupees a month for each of our forty crores of people, or five pice a day. That is what the great government plan boils down to. A child can earn five pice in an hour by spinning, so that even a child can produce more than the government plan. Well, what is the government going to do with those five pice? There will be railways, schools, agriculture, commerce; factories will be opened, scientific research will be undertaken, literature will be encouraged and languages taught. All this will come out of those five pice. If the people were to rely on themselves, they could do more than that. How is wealth produced?—by labour. Who does the labour?—the people. So that any power of the purse wielded by the government can never be a match for that wielded by the people.

[Vinoba Bhave, *Democratic Values and the Practice of Citizenship*
(Kashi: Sarva Sangh Prakashan, 1962), 7, 11–13.]

*COMMUNIST INSURGENCIES:
TELANGANA AND NAXALBARI*

The insurgencies in Kashmir, Punjab, and Nagaland aimed at creating new autonomous territorial areas based on historical experiences, religious affiliation, language, and culture; at the same time in post-Independence India, there were militant insurgencies of a quite different kind in other parts of the country that were based on versions of communist ideologies and made an appeal based on economic deprivation. Two such insurgencies were particularly violent—one centered in the Telangana region in the former princely state of Hyderabad, later the state of Andhra Pradesh, and the other centered in Naxalbari in northern West Bengal. In both areas the local peasants and laborers were subject to harsh exactions by landlords. Their causes were picked up by local and regional communist leaders who believed that Telangana in 1948 and rural northern West Bengal in the late 1960s were ripe for widespread revolution.

The selections on the uprisings in both regions come from manifestos of the political parties involved, giving a vivid sense of the intellectual basis of the ideological imperatives of the leaders, as well as of the nature of the violence. In both situations, the insurgencies were crushed by the government, but only after ruthless military campaigns by the army and police and the killing of landlords, merchants, and suspected traitors to the cause by the insurgents.

LEFTWARD MOVE OF THE CPI,
AND THE TELANGANA REBELLION

In the period immediately after Independence and Partition, from early 1948, an important section of the Communist Party of India (CPI)—believing that they were following the (Soviet) Cominform line and also responding to violent peasant actions against landlords in the Telangana area of the princely state of Hyderabad—declared that India was prepared for a violent, rural-based uprising. They compared the situation in India to China, where the communists were on the offensive, and to Yugoslavia, where the communists had gained power. It is estimated that some three thousand villages in Hyderabad were sympathetic to the insurgency.

The supporters of immediate violent revolution within the CPI gained the upper hand, but those in the center and to the right disagreed with such bloody tactics. In 1950 the communists appealed for guidance from outside India, and R. Palme Dutt, general secretary of the British Communist Party and long an adviser of the CPI, responded.

Dutt recommended that the party drop the left line and search for like-minded allies within other parties, such as the left wing of the Congress, led by Prime Minister Nehru. Although Nehru was anathema to the far left communists, who viewed him as a “lackey of imperialism,” the CPI as a whole did move to the right and into electoral politics, contesting the 1951 elections for the Lok Sabha.

During the left period the party was also divided on how to deal with the government of India's military action in seizing Hyderabad state. Should the army of the bourgeois India state, tied to international imperialism, be welcomed or resisted? The rebellion in some districts of the Hyderabad countryside remains in the memory of Indian leftists as a model for a spontaneous rising from below that could eventually again take place in a larger action against the landlords and rulers of India. Some analysts of Indian communism have called this the first period of "Indian Maoism," and that of the Naxalites in the 1960s, the second. Although Telangana was merged with the new state of Andhra Pradesh as part of the linguistic reorganization of the country, to be discussed below, the demand for a separate state remained and, since 2001, has been pursued with increasing vigor.

This selection from 1951 indicates that the Communist Party recognized that ending the insurgency was the wise course, when confronted by the reality of government military power.

In certain sections of the party as well as in circles which have been friendly to the struggle of the Telangana peasants, questions have been raised regarding the policies and methods to be pursued in the struggle going on for the last five years. The central committee wishes to stress that while it is the right and duty of comrades and party units in all parts of the country to make suggestions to the CC about the tactics to be adopted in the Telangana struggle, it is primarily the masses, the people of Telangana, who began, fought and suffered in their great fight against feudal oppression for land and liberty, who have to decide the issue. While the Communist Party of India is proud to state that it stood with the people and led them in their heroic resistance to oppression, it cannot act like the high command of Congress which decides upon struggles and continues, hampers or withdraws them without reference to the will of the masses concerned. Throughout India the question of abolishing feudal landlordism and introducing agrarian reforms, so as to give land to the peasant and solve the people's food problem, has been torpedoed by the reactionary vested interests entrenched behind the government.

Under such conditions, to protect Telangana, to preserve the gains of the lakhs of peasants and agricultural workers who fought and won land, reduction of rent and interest, and freedom from forced labour, is to show the way to really achieve agrarian reforms and not merely paper promises. At the same time, the CC wishes to state that it is prepared to solve the problem by negotiation and settlement, intended to preserve and protect the interests of the peasantry and the people and to restore peaceful conditions in the area. . . .

It is believed in some circles that the struggle in Telangana is being fought in order to overthrow the Nehru government. These circles ignore the fact that the struggle of the peasants for land and against the oppression of the feudal landlords and the Nizam began in 1946 long before the Nehru government came into existence. And it continued even after its entry into the Nizam state, solely to protect the peasant against the landlords who were now being reinstated

by the Nehru government in alliance with the Nizam, to overthrow whose rule it had ostensibly entered the state.

Hence it should be clear to all that the struggle of the Telangana peasants was neither begun nor continued to overthrow the Nehru government but to do away with feudal oppression. And everyone desiring the progress of our country would agree that to struggle to end feudal landlord oppression is right and necessary because that alone can give us food, employment, prosperity and freedom.

Keeping this in mind, the CC decided to direct the secretariat:

(1) To review the problem of Telangana in order to find ways and means to ensure success of the struggle; (2) Appeals to all party units and members to popularise the demands of the Telangana peasants and to mobilise support of workers, peasants and the people against repression and military atrocities in Telangana; (3) Appeals to democrats of all shades to protect the Telangana people from repression, carried out by military occupation; and (4) Puts forward the following demands of the peasantry before all the people with a view to secure their active intervention: (a) All lands that are being cultivated by the peasants and agricultural workers should continue in their possession and enjoyment. No cultivating peasant and agricultural worker shall be evicted from land. All lands forcibly seized from the peasants should be restored. (b) Right of tribal people to free use and sale of forest produce and freedom to cultivate forest lands under their own elected panchayats. (c) Village administration to be carried on by panchayats elected by all the villagers, including women. (d) Immediate withdrawal of all armed forces and disbanding of home guards convicted or detained. (e) Withdrawal of cases and cancellation of collective fines. (f) Withdrawal of ban on the Andhra Mahasabha and the Communist Party; restoration of civil liberties. (g) Constituent assembly elected by universal adult franchise to decide the future of the Nizam dynasty and the dissolution of the Hyderabad state into linguistic provinces of Andhra, Maharashtra and Karnataka and complete regional autonomy to tribal areas.

[Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India.

Vol. 7: 1951–1956, ed. M. Sen (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1976), 55–58.]

UPRISING IN NAXALBARI: DECLARATIONS OF THE REVOLUTIONARIES

From “Naxalbari,” the name of the region in Bengal where the insurgency started, the communists who wanted to achieve their ends by force came to be known as “Naxalites,” even when they were not in Naxalbari. The leaders were not from the original Communist Party of India (CPI) that had been active in Telangana, but were from the breakaway Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPM), which had split from the CPI in 1964 and was far more radical in its rejection of what it considered the bourgeois liberal political pattern of the new Indian government. Then in 1967, a

group from the CPM, completely antipathetic to electoral politics, separated and followed a course of violent acts against landowners and political opponents, including socialists and some communists. This group, the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)—CPI(M-L), or Naxalites—gained some support in rural areas, where peasant grievances were many, and from some younger communists. By 1967, the CPM in West Bengal had joined a leftist coalition state government. So the suppression of the violent communist Naxalite uprising was carried out by the more liberal communist state government and the central government, headed by Indira Gandhi. Special armed police were sent by the center to help in this process. According to some accounts, a few thousand radical communists, some young students, and even their relatives were killed in the ruthless quest to eradicate the Naxalites.

This selection shows the rejection by the CPI(M-L) of the leadership of the old Communist Party of India (CPI) and the CPM, as well as its attack on the existing political structure of India and on the relationship of India to the United States and the Soviet Union, which it viewed as imperialist powers. Instead the CPI(M-L) looked to China and its leader, Mao Zedong, as the source of guidance for India. Reading documents of this kind gives a good sense of the internal wrangling over points of doctrine that absorbed the energies of the leadership of the various communist factions. In defeating the insurgents, the government of India was able to take advantage both of the lack of cohesive leadership among the communist groups, and of their rather fanciful reading of Indian political and social reality, which argued that rural India was ready for violent revolution. The “open revolt” mentioned below is against both the state and the Communist Party of India, by rebels who regard the old Party as moribund. For example, the Dange clique, denigrated in the Second Declaration, refers to the followers of S. A. Dange (1899–1991), a founding member of the CPI who in the 1970s supported the Congress and its leader, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

DECLARATION OF THE REVOLUTIONARIES IN THE
COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (MARXIST)
NOVEMBER 13, 1967

Naxalbari came as a turning point in the history of our Party and country. The revolutionary comrades of Darjeeling district of West Bengal rose in open revolt against the Party’s revisionist leadership and politics as well as against the organisational slavery imposed by this leadership. But unlike earlier inner-party struggles, this revolt was accompanied by revolutionary practice. It is a typical peasant war modelled on Comrade Mao Tsetung’s Thought and led by communists and the working class, opening up the real and only way to India’s democratic revolution. This great class battle of Darjeeling peasants at once received the warm fraternal care of the leader of world communism—the Chinese Communist Party led by Chairman Mao Tsetung and at once it galvanised long-simmering inner-party struggles into open revolutionary revolt. Simultaneously, Naxalbari unleashed militant and armed peasant battles in different parts of the

country, sometimes spontaneous and sometimes led by revolutionaries. But one of Naxalbari's great contributions to the Indian Revolution is that it has stripped naked the leadership of the Party [CPI] and of other parties mouthing revolutionary slogans and has laid bare before the eyes of the world the utter hollowness of their revolutionism. They even openly joined hands with Indian reactionaries to crush this revolutionary peasant base with utmost military and police brutality.

Comrades must have noted that revolutionary peasant struggles are now breaking out or going to break out in various parts of the country. It is an imperative revolutionary duty on our part as the vanguard of the working class to develop and lead these struggles as far as possible. With that end in view all revolutionary elements inside and outside the Party working rather in isolation today in different parts of the country and on different fronts of mass struggle must co-ordinate their activities and unite their forces to build up a *revolutionary party* guided by Marxism-Leninism, the Thought of Mao Tsetung. . . .

So we, the comrades of different states, who have been thinking and fighting on the above line, have decided after meeting in Calcutta to form an All-India Co-ordination Committee. On behalf of this Committee, we declare that its main tasks will be:

(1) To develop and co-ordinate militant and revolutionary struggles at all levels, specially, peasant struggles of the Naxalbari type under the leadership of the working class;

(2) To develop militant, revolutionary struggles of the working class and other toiling people to combat economism and to orient these struggles towards agrarian revolution;

(3) To wage an uncompromising ideological struggle against revisionism and neo-revisionism and to popularise the Thought of Comrade Mao Tsetung, which is Marxism-Leninism of the present era, and to unite on this basis all revolutionary elements within and outside the Party;

(4) To undertake preparations of a revolutionary programme and tactical line based on concrete analysis of the Indian situation in the light of Comrade Mao Tsetung's Thought.

Naxalbari has shown us the way to the Indian people's democratic revolution as much as it has unmasked the true face of the neo-revisionists at present controlling the Party. Now it is time to act and act we must, here and now. It is time we start building a *really revolutionary party*. A great responsibility rests upon us and we must shoulder it as true revolutionaries and try to prove ourselves worthy disciples of Comrade Mao Tsetung.

SECOND DECLARATION

MAY 14, 1968

[Translated from the Bengali version of the Declaration]:

The All India Co-ordination Committee of Revolutionaries of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), in its first session held on the eve of the first anni-

versary of the Naxalbari peasants' struggle, reviewed the events subsequent to its first session held six months back and decided to issue a new declaration in consideration of the changed situation. It was also decided that henceforward the Committee would be called the *All India Co-ordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries*. The declaration is as follows:

Exactly a year ago the nor'wester with all its fury burst over India and proclaimed throughout the world that a new era had begun in India's history. Inspired by Marxism-Leninism and Chairman Mao's Thought and led by the communist revolutionaries, the heroic peasants of Naxalbari rose in revolt with arms in their hands to smash the chains of slavery. Once again they showed that the parliamentary path which all sorts of revisionists, overt or covert, had been treading, had become altogether outmoded. Since that day the message of Naxalbari, the message of armed peasant struggle under the leadership of the working class—has reached villages in remote areas of India and under its inspiration many a peasant struggle has begun in different parts of the country. While, on the one hand, this event has caused panic in the minds of U.S. imperialists, Soviet revisionists, the Indian big landlord class, comprador-bourgeois class and their stooges, the renegade Dange clique and neo-revisionists, on the other hand, the toiling people of India and all the revolutionary elements irrespective of their party affiliations have greeted this event with hope and exuberance. To them Naxalbari is a path—the path which is brightly illuminated with Chairman Mao's Thought—the path which is the path of liberation of all colonial and semi-colonial people—the path along which the Chinese Revolution is victorious.

A little over twenty years ago India was a colony of Britain; today India has been turned into a neo-colony of some imperialist powers, the principal of them being the United States and the Soviet Union. The U.S. imperialists, the most aggressive enemies of mankind, are also the worst enemies of the Indian people. Their neo-colonial grip over India is now complete. The traitorous Soviet ruling clique who have re-established bourgeois dictatorship in the first Socialist State of the world are to-day actively collaborating with the U.S. imperialists and they have turned India into a neo-colony of both the United States and the Soviet Union. India is a perfect example of the entente into which the U.S. imperialists and Soviet neo-colonialists have entered to jointly establish hegemony over the world. . . .

Today, U.S. imperialism, Soviet revisionism, the big landlord class and the comprador-bourgeoisie of India are the principal enemies of the Indian people—these are like four mountains weighing heavily on the backs of the Indian people.

The People's Democratic Revolution can succeed only by overthrowing the direct and indirect rule of these four enemies. Under the leadership of the working class, the peasantry—the principal force in the revolution—will have to develop revolutionary base areas in the countryside, carry on a protracted armed struggle, encircle the cities from the villages and in the end occupy them and

win countrywide final victory. On the basis of the alliance of the working class with the peasantry will be built the united front of the working class, the peasantry, the petty-bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie. The success of the Indian Revolution will depend on how much the revolutionaries and the people have been enthused by Chairman Mao's Thought which is the highest development of Marxism-Leninism of our time.

[Samar Sen et al., eds., *Naxalbari and After: A Frontier Anthology* (Calcutta: Kathashilpa, 1978), 192–201.]

Although powerful governmental pressures, including the use of the armed forces and special police, were largely successful in crushing the violent revolutionary actions in Telangana and the Naxalbari areas, sporadic activity continued. In 2004 two prominent Naxalite groups, the People's War Group (PWG) and the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC), coalesced into a larger bloc, the Communist Party of India (Maoist)—CPI (Maoist)—that was determined to fight what the bloc called Indian fascism. Members of this bloc have carried out attacks in the states of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Orissa, which have been their organizational strongholds, as well as in the Gadchiroli region in Maharashtra, and in rural northern West Bengal. They believe they are carrying on a People's War, and they aim to establish liberated areas.

In July 2009 Prime Minister Manmohan Singh pointed to these groups as the most dangerous threat to India's internal security, with activity in 231 of the country's 626 districts. In late 2009 his government instituted a strong response called "Operation Green Hunt."

The Maoists are opposed not only by the government, which employs paramilitary forces and the nation's armed forces where necessary, but also by the CPI(M), which adheres to a program of mass organizing and electoral politics. In November 2009 Prakash Karat, general secretary of the CPI(M), insisted in an interview with the Indian news magazine *Frontline* that the Maoists were harming efforts to eradicate poverty through their "sectarian and adventurous approach." He added that poor peasant members of his own party had been killed by the Maoists, and that violent tactics would not bring real change to India.

RANAJIT GUHA AND THE SUBALTERN SCHOOL: CHALLENGING RECEIVED INTERPRETATIONS

All modern nations have national narratives that are intended to increase a sense of national unity, and Indian leaders have been very conscious of this. In India, perhaps the best-known national narrative has had as its defining framework the struggle for independence from British rule as waged by the Indian National Congress with its host of able leaders, many of whom have been highlighted in selections in previous chapters. This narrative was challenged, however, by other readings of the past, of which the most prominent, noted in chapters 6 and 7, was the alternative nationalism

of Muslim separatism formulated by Muslim leaders, which contributed to the partition of British India in 1947. In direct opposition to this Muslim nationalism, as well as to the ideology of the Congress, was a third narrative created by groups such as the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), who asserted that Indian national identity must be rooted in the Hindu civilization that preceded the intrusion of Islamic and Western political and cultural power.

A fourth, quite different challenge to the received histories of nationalism in South Asia has come not from political leaders, but from a group of historians, political scientists, and anthropologists; this group has called for a radical reinterpretation of all these forms of Indian national narrative. The main concern of this Subaltern Studies Collective is to show the role of “subaltern” classes—that is, peasants and other non-elite groups in modern Indian history—in contrast to the elite leadership of groups like the Indian National Congress, the Muslim League, and the Hindu nationalist organizations. The subalterns, these scholars argue, existed in an autonomous domain that neither originated from nor depended upon elite politics.

The clearest statement of the position of these scholars is found in the many volumes of *Subaltern Studies*, edited by Ranajit Guha. The following excerpt is taken from Guha’s introductory essay to the first volume.

1. The historiography of Indian nationalism has for a long time been dominated by elitism—colonialist elitism and bourgeois-nationalist elitism. Both originated as the ideological product of British rule in India, but have survived the transfer of power and been assimilated to neo-colonialist and neo-nationalist forms of discourse in Britain and India respectively. Elitist historiography of the colonialist or neo-colonialist type counts British writers and institutions among its principal protagonists, but has its imitators in India and other countries too. Elitist historiography of the nationalist or neo-nationalist type is primarily an Indian practice but not without imitators in the ranks of liberal historians in Britain and elsewhere.

2. Both these varieties of elitism share the prejudice that the making of the Indian nation and the development of the consciousness—nationalism—which informed this process, were exclusively or predominantly elite achievements. In the colonialist and neo-colonialist historiographies these achievements are credited to British colonial rulers, administrators, policies, institutions and culture; in the nationalist and neo-nationalist writings, to Indian elite personalities, institutions, activities and ideas.

3. The first of these two historiographies defines Indian nationalism primarily as a function of stimulus and response. Based on a narrowly behaviouristic approach[,] this represents nationalism as the sum of the activities and ideas by which the Indian elite responded to the institutions, opportunities, resources, etc. generated by colonialism.

4. The general orientation of the other kind of elitist historiography is to represent Indian nationalism as primarily an idealist venture in which the

indigenous elite led the people from subjugation to freedom. . . . The history of Indian nationalism is thus written up as a sort of spiritual biography of the Indian elite. . . .

6. What, however, historical writing of this kind cannot do is to explain Indian nationalism for us. For it fails to acknowledge, far less interpret, the contribution made by the people *on their own*, that is, *independently of the elite* to the making and development of this nationalism. . . .

7. . . . In all writings of this kind the parameters of Indian politics are assumed to be or enunciated as exclusively or primarily those of the institutions introduced by the British for the government of the country and the corresponding sets of laws, policies, attitudes and other elements of the superstructure. . . .

8. What clearly is left out of this un-historical historiography is the *politics of the people*. For parallel to the domain of elite politics there existed throughout the colonial period another domain of Indian politics in which the principal actors were not the dominant groups of the indigenous society or the colonial authorities but the subaltern classes and groups constituting the mass of the labouring population and the intermediate strata in town and country—that is, the people. This was an *autonomous* domain, for it neither originated from elite politics nor did its existence depend on the latter. . . .

15. It is the study of this *historic failure of the nation to come to its own*, a failure due to the inadequacy of the bourgeoisie as well as of the working class to lead it into a decisive victory over colonialism and a bourgeois-democratic revolution of either the classic nineteenth-century type under the hegemony of the bourgeoisie or a more modern type under the hegemony of workers and peasants, that is, a “new democracy”—*it is the study of this failure which constitutes the central problematic of the historiography of colonial India*. . . .

16. . . . The elitism of modern Indian historiography is an oppressive fact represented by many others, students, teachers and writers like ourselves. . . . We claim no more than to try and indicate an orientation and hope to demonstrate in practice that this is feasible. In any discussion which may ensue we expect to learn a great deal not only from the agreement of those who think like us but also from the criticism of those who don't.

[From Ranajit Guha, “On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India,” in *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981), 1–7.]

SMITU KOTHARI: THE NARMADA MOVEMENT, NATIONAL PLANNING, AND POPULAR RESISTANCE

The use of the great rivers of India to provide hydroelectric power, drinking water, and water for irrigation had been a dream of Nehru and other planners; Nehru had

once referred to the great dams that would be built as the new temples of India. Some such dams were built, with great acclaim, but when the government, with the assistance of the World Bank, started one of the largest dam undertakings of the century, the Sardar Sarovar Project, to develop of the valley of the Narmada, the great river in western India with its deep cultural and religious associations—a project that promised benefits to hundreds of thousands of people—the result was a storm of protest. Farmers whose lands would be inundated protested, as did tribal people living in the neighboring hills, but so did socially conscious and environmental groups throughout India. Medha Patkar, a social science graduate, and Baba Amte, a social worker, helped mobilize people against the dam. Patkar argued that development must be undertaken only for a sustainable, just society based on nonexploitative relationships, and she gained support not only in India, but in Europe and North America.

In this selection, people's movement activist Smitu Kothari (1950–2009), using the language of social science, links the opposition that developed to the Narmada Dam Project both to other resistance movements that grew up in India after 1947 (Kashmir, Punjab, Nagaland, Telangana, and the Naxalites) and to earlier resistance movements against the British. This selection should be read against those of Vinoba Bhave, Amartya Sen, Jagdish Bhagwati, and the Planning Commission.

Like many other contemporary social and political movements, the Narmada movement is part of an important history of resistance. Politically, it shares the legacy of earlier protests and revolts against the British—particularly in India's tribal areas— . . . in that it represents a sustained response to centralized state control over local economies as well as the imposition of “remote” administrative and political controls on local societies. At another level, however, its politics are singularly different. The movement is not, for instance, organized along class lines, neither is it an effort to withdraw the internal boundaries of the country to achieve a more politically and culturally autonomous region. In fact, we can possibly call it a class movement of the third kind in that it encompasses groups belonging to many different classes that are bound together by cultural and social dynamics, by place, and by being in reaction to centralized, “external” control.

The Narmada movement also differs from the militant Naxalite movements or elements of the secessionist movements in the Punjab and Kashmir or the insurgencies in the Northeast, in that its politics of resistance is self-consciously non-violent. By affirming pluralism of knowledge and culture, these “terrains of resistance” are also representative of growing assertions of marginal populations for greater economic control over their lives.

This leads us to an important question that needs to be explored. There has undoubtedly been significant mobilization in the Narmada valley. This has involved not just the people to be adversely affected by the project but also other political and social groups, lawyers, scientists, the media (mostly outside, but increasingly also in Gujarat) along with leading intellectuals and concerned

citizen groups all over the world. What is crucial in this process is the recognition that, while the strength of the movement will depend on the strength of local mobilization, the range and intensity of activity beyond the immediate context represents an important cognitive and organizational shift from the local to the national level. Stated differently, the realization that local problems have extra-local origins and legitimation has inspired a widening of the ambit of struggle; in the process, challenging the profound limitations of the present processes of democracy. . . . Increasingly, there is also public acknowledgment and support for the Narmada movement by many other groups and movements who have been impressed by the sustained mobilization of the movement, its tenacity, and its complex strategies and tactics. However, there continues to be little sustained response among other concerned sections in the middle classes, in the trade unions, and among the academia. Why?

Some commentators argue that at the current historical juncture, other issues are draining the political and emotional fabric of individuals and communities. Growing religious chauvinism and fundamentalism, communal strife, escalating lawlessness by both state and nonstate actors, coupled with the continuing economic stress (including the implications of the recent changes in the economic policy and the ramifications of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank conditionalities) are, they state, possibly exhausting the ground for wider citizen response to situations like those in the Narmada valley.

It is somewhat paradoxical that the national press and a significant cross-section of the regional press have consistently been favorable to the Narmada movement and have, on numerous occasions, exposed the repressive and apathetic nature of the official response. . . . It is possible that, in their minds, a majority of individuals to be affected are "marginal" people who are relatively unconnected or peripheral to national politics and to the middle classes. Is the difference and apathy then indicative of the social and economic gulf between groups affected by development projects and the concerned middle classes and elites? . . . It is easier to understand the response of political parties across the political spectrum. After all, none of them wants to threaten its potential electoral base in Gujarat where, because of a variety of factors, there is a perceived mass support for the project. Several years of drought have been politically exploited by the ruling elites to sell the Sardar Sarovar Project as a panacea for the vagaries of such calamities.

It has often been officially proclaimed that the Sardar Sarovar Project will be the "lifeline of Gujarat." This rhetoric, coupled with the expanding demands of Gujarat's industrial and cash crop economy, has created a wide base of support for the project and a climate in which criticisms of the project are denounced as anti-development and anti-Gujarat. . . . The role of the central government has been no different. Movement representatives have met with successive prime ministers and concerned ministers at the state and central levels, but the re-

sponse to the basic demand for a public dialogue in light of the continuing social, economic, and environmental problems has never been conceded.

[Smitu Kothari, "Damming the Narmada and the Politics of Development," in *Toward Sustainable Development: Struggling Over India's Narmada River*, ed. William F. Fisher (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1995), 421–426.]

THE CONTINUING OPPRESSIONS OF CASTE

During the years immediately following Independence, hopes were high that the new state, founded on a constitution emphasizing socialism, secularism, and democracy, with inbuilt safeguards for individual rights and with directive principles aiming at increased social justice, would experience a lessening of caste consciousness and caste discrimination. The center's reservation policies for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes did yield certain benefits, but by the 1970s it had become clear to analysts, policy-makers, and some politicians that the expected strides forward in terms of opportunity and advancement for all sections of the low castes had not materialized. One response continued to be legislative, with additional groups of the population agitating for inclusion in government reservation policies. The greatly controversial Mandal Commission Report—filed in 1980 but first implemented (abortively) only in 1989, and in the process causing the fall of the V. P. Singh government—is an excellent example of the politics of affirmative action.

Concurrent types of activism included the founding of caste-based political parties, the publication of literature that revealed the horror of caste stigma and degradation, the repudiation of Hindu caste culture (often by conversion to a different religious tradition), and the use of the law courts to redress wrongs. The degree to which such measures have—and have not—been successful is indicated by the selections below, in which low- and out-caste Indians write of their pain and anger. Even when a Dalit's outward circumstances have been materially ameliorated, upper-caste disdain and hatred remain obstacles. In 2009, looking back over two decades since the passing of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Prevention of Atrocities Act of 1989, observers were forced to admit that although the act was intended to enable the social inclusion of Dalits in Indian society, because of a near-total lack of implementation, it had failed to live up to expectations.

THE MANDAL COMMISSION AND THE OTHER BACKWARD CLASSES (OBCS)

Under the Indian Constitution, following policies that had begun under the Raj, reservations were made for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in

Parliament and for administrative positions in government. Such a policy of affirmative action was designed to help the very lowest in Indian society, and since the SCs and STs constituted 22.5 percent of the total population, this percentage was reserved for them.

In 1979 the government of India set up the Mandal Commission on the backward classes. The commission's report, submitted in 1980, called for a further reservation of 27 percent for the so-called OBCs (Other Backward Classes, i.e., other than the Scheduled Castes and Tribes). The OBCs adjudged backward, and thus in need of assistance through some scheme of further affirmative action, constituted a considerable segment of the total Indian population. But because the Constitution stipulated that total reservations must be under 50 percent, and because 22.5 percent was already committed to the SCs and STs, the OBCs were limited to 27 percent.

Because of their sensitivity, the recommendations of the commission were not implemented until 1989. The prime minister at that time, V. P. Singh, head of the National Front government, announced on August 7, 1990, that he had decided to implement the recommendations. Riots and then suicides ensued, especially among high-caste students in northern India who believed that they particularly would be deprived of positions in government and educational institutions by this large bloc of reserved places. The pattern of riots mapped neatly onto areas of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) strength—and L. K. Advani's *ratha yātrā* (chariot journey) to liberate the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya was announced quickly thereafter (see further below). However, an *India Today* poll of the time revealed strong popular support for, not against, the Mandal recommendations.

At first, parties such as the Congress and BJP were wary of backing the report, but as the demonstrations died down and they saw the large caste vote blocs involved, they too came to accept the Mandal Commission's recommendations, which have since been implemented.

The selections to follow are summaries of the various chapters of the 1980 report.

CHAPTER IV — SOCIAL BACKWARDNESS AND CASTE

Castes are the building blocks of the Hindu social structure. They have kept Hindu society divided in a hierarchical order for centuries. This has resulted in a close linkage between the caste ranking of a person and his social, educational, and economic status.

This manner of stratification of society gave higher castes deep-rooted vested interests in the perpetuation of the system. The priestly castes evolved an elaborate and subtle scheme of scripture, ritual, and mythology and perpetuate their supremacy and hold the lower castes in bondage for ages. Most of our Shastras uphold the four-fold Varna system and, because of this religious sanction, caste system has lasted longer than most other social institutions based on inequality and inequity.

In view of the permanent stratification of society in hierarchical caste order, members of lower castes have always suffered from discrimination in all walks of life and this has resulted in their social, educational, and economic backwardness. In India, therefore, the low ritual caste status of a person has a direct bearing on his social backwardness.

CHAPTER V — SOCIAL DYNAMICS OF CASTE

Caste system has been able to survive over the centuries because of its inherent resilience and its ability to adjust itself to the ever changing social reality. The traditional view of caste system, as contained in Chapter IV, is based more on Hindu Shastras than the actual state of social reality. Moreover, caste restrictions have loosened considerably as a result of the rule of law introduced by the British, urbanization, industrialisation, spread of mass education, and, above all, the introduction of adult franchise after independence. But all the above changes mark only a shift of emphasis and not any material alteration in the basic structure of caste.

It is generally agreed that whereas certain caste taboos have weakened as a result of the above changes, the importance of casteism in Indian politics is on the increase. This, perhaps, was inevitable. Caste system provided the political leadership with readymade channels of communication and mobilization and, in view of this, the importance of caste was bound to increase in Indian politics. As Rajni Kothari has observed, “those in India who complain of ‘casteism’ in politics are really looking for a sort of politics which has no basis in society.” . . .

CHAPTER VI — SOCIAL JUSTICE, MERIT, AND PRIVILEGE

Equality before the law is a basic Fundamental Right guaranteed under Article 14 of the Constitution. But the principle of “equality” is a double-edged weapon. It places the strong and the handicapped on the same footing in the race of life. It is a dictum of social justice that there is equality only among equals. To treat unequals as equals is to perpetuate inequality. The humaneness of a society is determined by the degree of protection it provides to its weaker, handicapped and less gifted members. . . .

It was in view of these considerations that our Constitution makers made special provision under Articles 15(4), 16(4), and 46 etc. to protect the interests of SCs, STs, and OBCs. Some people consider provisions like reservation of posts for backward classes, etc., as a violation of their Fundamental Rights and denial of [a] meritorious person’s legitimate due. In fact, “merit” itself is largely a product of favourable environmental privileges and higher rating in an examination does not necessarily reflect higher intrinsic worth of the examinee. Children of social and educationally backward parents coming from rural background

cannot compete on an equal footing with children from well to do homes. In view of this, "merit" and "equality" should be viewed in proper perspective and the element of privilege should be duly recognized and discounted for when "unequals" are made to run the same race. . . .

CHAPTER IX — EVIDENCE BY CENTRAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS

Two sets of questionnaires were circulated to all State Governments, Union Territories, and Ministries and Departments of Central Government for eliciting information on various aspects of our inquiry. These questionnaires were designed to obtain a comparative picture of status of backward classes in various States, steps taken for their welfare, views of various Government agencies on the question of social and educational backwardness, and any other useful suggestions regarding the Commission's term of reference.

Most of the State Governments favoured caste as an important criterion for determining social and educational backwardness. Eighteen State Governments and Union Territories have taken special steps for the welfare of Other Backward Classes, though there is wide variation in the quantum of assistance provided by them. For instance, reservation in Government services for OBCs ranges from 50% in the case of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu and 5% in Punjab and nil in the case of Rajasthan, Orissa, Delhi, etc. Representation of OBCs in local bodies, State Public Service Commissions, High Courts, etc., is also negligible. Social discrimination is still practiced against OBCs. There are a number of castes and communities which are treated as untouchables though they have not been included in the list of Scheduled Castes. All the State Governments which have launched programmes for the welfare of the backward classes have to fund the same from their own resources as no separate Plan allocation is made by the Centre for this purpose.

From the information supplied by the Central Government Ministries and Departments it is seen that Other Backward Classes constitute 12.55% of the total number of Government employees, whereas their aggregate population is 52%. Their representation in Class I jobs is only 4.69%, *i.e.* less than $\frac{1}{10}$ th of their proportion to the country's total population. . . .

CHAPTER XIII — RECOMMENDATIONS

Reservations for SCs and ST are in proportion to their population, *i.e.* 22.5%. But as there is a legal obligation to keep reservations under Articles 15(4) and 16(4) of the Constitution below 50%, the Commission recommends a reservation of 27% for OBCs. This reservation should apply to all Government services as well as technical and professional institutions, both in the Centre and the States.

Special educational facilities designed at upgrading the cultural environment of the students should be created in a phased manner in selected areas containing high concentration of OBCs. Special emphasis should be placed on vocational training. Separate coaching facilities should be provided in technical and professional institutions to OBC students to enable them to catch up with students from open quota.

Special programmes for upgrading the skills of village artisans should be prepared and subsidized loans from financial institutions granted to them for setting up small scale industries. To promote the participation of OBCs in the industrial and business life of the country, a separate network of financial and technical institutions should be created by all State Governments.

Under the existing scheme of production-relations, Backward Classes comprising mainly small land holders, tenants, agricultural labour, village artisans, etc., are heavily dependent on the rich peasantry for their sustenance. In view of this, OBCs continue to remain in mental and material bondage of the dominant castes and classes. Unless these production-relations are radically altered through structural changes and progressive land reforms implemented rigorously all over the country, OBCs will never become truly independent. In view of this, highest priority should be given to radical land reforms by all the States.

At present no Central assistance is available to any State for implementing any welfare measures for other Backward Classes. Several State Governments expressed their helplessness in undertaking more purposeful development programmes for backward classes in view of lack of resources. It is, therefore, recommended that welfare programmes specially designed for OBCs should be financed by the Central Government in the same manner and to the same extent as done in the case of SCs and STs.

[*Reservations for Backward Classes: Mandal Commission Report of the Backward Classes Commission*, 1980 (Delhi: Akalank Publications, 1991), 66–69.]

VIRAMMA: THE LIFE OF A RURAL DALIT WOMAN

Between 1980 and 1990, a Tamil-born ethnomusicologist, Josiane Racine, held a series of conversations with Viramma, a Tamil Dalit woman from the Pariayar (Pariah) caste, illiterate and then in her sixties, about her life. What emerged from the closeness and trust that grew between the two women is a remarkable collection of oral transcriptions, originally published in French (1995) and translated into English as *Viramma: Life of an Untouchable*.

The excerpts selected here hint at the changes occurring in modern India, as an anti-Brahman, politicized egalitarianism seeks to undermine the old ideology of caste—according to which the degraded status of Untouchables is blamed on their bad karma, which justifies village demands that they fulfill their distinctive caste

obligations (the Pariayars were drummers) with humility, respect, and a proper acknowledgment of their debasement. Married as a girl to a Pariayar man from Pondicherry in Tamil Nadu, she lived all her subsequent life in his village *ceri*, the Untouchable “colony,” or section of the village, outside the upper-caste *ur*. Viramma does not attack oppression—she never uses the term “Dalit” to refer to herself, preferring “Paraiyar”—but takes instead a practical approach to the indignities she must face in life, worrying about the fate of her more politicized, indignant son, Anban, and fearing the hollow promises of politicians that threaten to challenge the “protection” she receives from the oppressive Reddiar landlords. Viramma’s narrative reveals the everyday, internalized oppression of a Dalit woman.

“Sinnamma” is the affectionate name Viramma gives Josiane; “Velpakkatta,” or “girl from Velpakkam village,” is a nickname for Viramma.

That morning, Sinnamma, I went to see Grandfather Muniyan, the oldest of all of us in the *ceri*. “Grandfather, we’re called Pariahs. Do you know why we’re called that?”

“Listen, Velpakkatta! In the beginning, the divine beings ruled over the universe. Several *yugam* ago, men took over from them. In those days there were no castes. Well, if you like, there were two: men and women. As soon as humans took possession of the universe, there was the problem of how to share it out. It hadn’t been a problem before—the gods never needed to share it out to rule over it, because they are everywhere at the same time. There were quarrels when men wanted to divide it up. One of them, seeing it was turning ugly, began to hide things, belongings. And just when he was about to hide a drum, the others saw him and shouted, ‘*Paraiya maraiyade*,’ ‘Hey you with the drum, don’t hide.’ Since then we’ve been called Paraiyar and we’ve been rejected for being descendants of the thief who stole that drum. If that son of a whore hadn’t stolen anything, we would all have lived together in the *ur*, eh! Why did those dog fuckers do that? They could have waited to be given their share, couldn’t they? All of this for a drum! But Velpakkatta, it’s our fate and nothing will make it change, not even those politicians who say there mustn’t be Pariahs any more! You see, I’m going to leave soon. I was born a Pariah. I have done my duty during the time I’ve had, and I’m going to die a Pariah. Perhaps I’ll be reborn in the womb of the Reddiar, in the household where I was a serf, or perhaps I’ll be a wandering dog. Who knows? I’m not the one who decides! And it’s not the people from the political parties who are going to change the lot of the Pariahs and mix them up with other castes. Tell Sinnamma that those men want to destroy everything, the harmony and peace we have here. Everyone does their trade: the one who cuts hair will be in the barbers’ caste: the one who washes linen will stay a launderer; the one who quarters dead cows will be a shoemaker; the one who crushes sesame will be in the oil pressers’ caste and he who sells that oil will be a Chettiar. And there will

have to be a Reddiar to be *kambattam*⁶ and to put twenty people to work. That's how castes are made."

"Grandfather," I said to him, "what you say doesn't suit this *kaliyugam* with these youngsters any more! Our Anban doesn't even want to hear the word Pariah! You know that! You were alive in the days when we didn't know anything and we were innocent."

"My time is over now, Velpakkatta. It's up to other people to run the world. I'm keeping quiet. You're the one who's come and stirred this up." Things happen differently in this *kaliyugam*, because Pariahs have started to go to Mailam again.⁷ I went there once on foot a long time ago. We had our meal on the way. When we got there our feet were as swollen as elephants' feet. I went back a second time after the marriage of Anban. There's the bus now, you only have to pay two rupees and you get out right at the foot of the temple. We saw all the paintings, it was really very beautiful!

Anban insisted that I go in. He said, "De, calm down! We've spent our money to come here and instead of going into the temple, you want to go back home. What idiot claims we have no right to go into the temple?"

"No, my son! Don't do that! This god will take away your sight! People like us haven't the right to go into these places!"

"De, tchi!" Anban answered, "be quiet! Why spend so much money if we don't see the sanctuary? Everything you're saying is tradition, stories from the old days!"

My son didn't want to listen and he always talks to me like that when I remind him we're Pariahs and that we should live humbly at a distance from the other castes. How many times have I told him, "Pa, no, don't go to the *ur* in such a beautiful shirt, with powder on your face and ash on your forehead! Don't put on your rings. Leave all that at home. You'll be able to do what you want after work. We're poor. We are Pariahs. We live from day to day. We only eat if we're given work. Those people from the *ur* employ us. We have to be humble, more humble than them. If you go around dressed like that, they'll say, 'What a nerve that Pariah's got to come and work for us in trousers and a shirt!' No, Appa, be humble and let's live like we used to!"

But he always says, "De, tchi! Get away, you and your speeches! If I don't wear trousers and shirts at my age, if I don't put ash on my forehead, tell me, when will I do it? Perhaps you think only the rich have the right to dress up, to wear a watch or glasses? No one else? Not me?"

"My son! My son! Calm down! We Pariahs must live apart, discreetly!"

"But those traditions don't apply any more in today's world, little sister! Wake up a little!"

"Dei, boy! Yes, yes, I'm your little sister and I'm the one who should listen! I'll tell you again, I came to this village as a little girl. I've grown up. I've had twelve children. I've honoured my name. Now I'm on the way out. It's your turn

to live here, to have children and to have a good reputation too. Listen to my advice. I'm your mother, I want the best for you!"

That's how he makes fun of me and how I try to argue with him! . . .

[Viramma, Josiane Racine, and Jan Luc Racine,
Viramma: Life of an Untouchable, trans. Will Hobson
(London: Verso, 1997), 165–169.]

Take an example: you were the one who came to me. I didn't go looking for you. What right would I have had to do that? I'm happy to know you, I love you like my own daughter. When it's just us, I talk to you with an open heart, I touch you when I talk to you. But could I behave like that with you outdoors? No! I owe you respect, you are a higher caste! Everything else is the same. They want to make us one, when God said, "Each of you stay in your caste. Live apart. There'll be no arguments. There'll be harmony and the world will turn in the right direction!"

Nowadays people think the opposite. They want the world to be one, and everybody to be the same, all with the same rights. That is the *kaliyugam*! It's good people want us to be raised up, but it's better if we stay in our place. That's what I'm always saying to my son, but he doesn't want to hear any of it. He thinks I'm wrong and says, "Who is this miserable God who made us Pariahs? We're all conceived in the same way! The husband screws the wife and we spend ten months in the womb! So why at birth do they become superior and us inferior? And we should have to accept that and work for a ten-rupee note? Who is the bastard of a God who's done that? If we ever meet him, we'll smash his face in! Why did he do that, that bloody God: them rich and us poor?"

My answer is, "De, Anban! Don't talk like that! Be humble and polite. Don't throw away the people who employ us. Honour them instead, that will do us much more good. We earn money through respect. People must say that the boy born from Velpakkatta's womb is very polite, well brought up, respectful and not that he's arrogant and a rogue who picks fights."

But he's always irritated by my advice. He says, "De! You really belong in the old days! You ask me to go to work dressed like a pauper. Every time I put something on to wear you find something wrong with it. You make remarks about my haircut and the same when I powder my face!"

Angry, I say to him, "Eh well, kid, get on with it, da! Powder yourself all you want and go off into the world without anyone's respect. You'll never have the name I had in this village. I got here when I was as big as that. I've had children and grandchildren. Your father was born here and now he's an old man. Look at the affection people feel for him. You, you're our absolute opposite!"

I lecture him kindly so he'll see sense, Sinnamma. "If the master who employs you wants to hit you, bend down and let it happen. Seeing your attitude his heart will melt and he'll let his arm drop. But if you rebel saying, 'So, how

can you raise your arm against me just because we're a different caste? How can you hit me?' If you answer back, his anger will only grow and he'll tell you, 'It's the party dogs who've made you so arrogant!'"

That's how it happens in the country, Sinnamma!

[Viramma, Josiane Racine, and Jan Luc Racine, *Viramma*, 191–192.]

KUMUD PAWDE: A DALIT WOMAN PROFESSOR DESCRIBES HER PROFESSIONAL LIFE

According to traditional Hindu social mores, a Dalit was not allowed to hear the Vedas, let alone learn them or recite their "refined," "cultured" Sanskrit language. Hence the moving power of the account, excerpted below, by Kumud Pawde (b. 1938), professor of Sanskrit at Nagpur University. Pawde describes the irony, as well as the personal triumph and anguish, of mastering a language associated with the very Brahman ascendancy and dominance that had compelled her and her community to endure so much brutal oppression.

"The Story of My 'Sanskrit'" is taken from her autobiography, *Antasphot*.

A lot of things are often said about me to my face. I've grown used to listening to them quietly; it's become a habit. What I have to listen to is praise. Actually, I don't at all like listening to praise. You may say that this itself is a form of self-indulgence. But that isn't so. I mean it sincerely. When I hear myself praised, it's like being stung by a lot of gadflies. As a result, I look askance at the person praising me. This expression must look like annoyance at being praised, for many misunderstandings have arisen about me in this connection. But it can't be helped. My acquaintances get angry with me because I am unable to accept compliments gracefully. I appear ill-mannered to them, because there isn't in me the courtesy they are expecting.

Now if you want to know why I am praised—well, it's for my knowledge of Sanskrit, my ability to learn it and to teach it. Doesn't anyone ever learn Sanskrit? That's not the point. The point is that Sanskrit and the social group I come from, don't go together in the Indian mind. Against the background of my caste, the Sanskrit I have learned appears shockingly strange.

That a woman from a caste that is the lowest of the low should learn Sanskrit, and not only that, also teach it—is a dreadful anomaly to a traditional mind. And an individual in whose personality these anomalies are accumulated becomes an object of attraction—an attraction blended of mixed acceptance and rejection. The attraction based on acceptance comes from my caste-fellows, in the admiration of whose glance is pride in an impossible achievement. That which for so many centuries was not to be touched by us, is now within our grasp. That which remained encased in the shell of difficulty, is now accessible. Seeing this knowledge hidden in the esoteric inner sanctum come within

the embrace, not just of any person, but one whom religion has considered to be vermin—that is their victory.

The other attraction—based on rejection—is devastating. It pricks holes in one's mind—turning a sensitive heart into a sieve. Words of praise of this kind, for someone who is aware, are like hot spears. It is fulsome praise. Words that come out from lips' edge as filthy as [red] betel-stained spit. Each word gleaming smooth as cream. Made up of the fragility of a honey-filled *shirish*⁸-blossom. Polished as marble. The sensation is that of walking on a soft velvety carpet—but being burnt by the hot embers hidden in someone's breast, and feeling the scorching pain in one's soul. The one who's speaking thinks the listener can't understand—for surely a low-caste person hasn't the ability to comprehend. But some people intend to be understood, so that I'll be crushed by the words. "Well, isn't that amazing! So you're teaching Sanskrit at the Government College, are you? That's very gratifying, I must say." The words are quite ordinary; their literal meaning is straight-forward. But the meaning conveyed by the tone in which they are said torments me in many different ways! "In what former life have I committed a sin that I should have to learn Sanskrit even from you?" "All our sacred scriptures have been polluted." Some despair is also conveyed by their facial expressions. "It's all over! *Kaliyug* has dawned. After all, they're the government's favourite sons-in-law! We have to accept it all." . . .

Beyond the accepters and the rejecters lies yet another group. In wholeheartedly welcoming the admiration of this group, every corner of my being is filled with pleasure. This group consists of my students. Far removed from hostile feelings. Without even an iota of caste consciousness. Away from the prejudices of their elders. Pure, innocent admiration, prompted by the boundless respect they feel, fills their eyes. Actually these girls have reached the age of understanding. The opinions they hear around them should by rights have made an impression on their mind. But these precious girls are full to the brim with the ability to discriminate impartially. . . .

In response to these hissings of wounded pride, I experience a mixture of emotions. Seeing this hostility and disgust, I slip into the past. This disgust is extremely familiar to me. In fact, that is what I have grown accustomed to, ever since I was old enough to understand. Actually, I shouldn't have any feelings about this disgust, and if I do have any feelings at all, they should be of gratitude. For it was this disgust that inclined me towards Sanskrit. It so happened that the ghetto in which there stood my place of birth, the house where I was welcome, was encircled on all sides by the houses of caste Hindus. The people in our ghetto referred to them as the Splendid People. A small girl like me, seven or eight years old, could not understand why they called them "Splendid." And even as today's mature female with learning from innumerable books, I still cannot understand it. That is, I have understood the literal meaning of the word "splendid." But not why it should be applied to them, or whether they deserve to have it applied. The girls who studied along with me were Brahmins

or from other higher castes. I had to pass their houses. I paused, waiting casually for their company. Right in front of me, the mothers would warn their daughters, “Be careful! Don’t touch her. Stay away from her. And don’t play with her. Or I won’t let you into the house again.” Those so-called educated, civilized mothers were probably unconscious of the effect of this on my young mind. It wasn’t as if I could not understand them. . . .

With great eagerness and interest, I began my study of Sanskrit. As I learnt the first-declension masculine form of the word “deva,” I picked up the rhythm of the chant. I must make special mention of the person who helped me to learn by rote the first lesson about aspirates—my teacher Gokhale. If I omit to do so, I shall feel a twinge of disloyalty in every drop of my blood. Gokhale Guruji. Dhoti, long-sleeved shirt, black cap, a sandalwood-paste mark on his forehead. The typical robust and clear pronunciation of the Vedic school. And an incredible concern for getting his students to learn Sanskrit. At first I was afraid. But this proved groundless. What actually happened was the very opposite of what I had expected. . . .

Against all obstacles, I at last matriculated. On seeing the marks I got for Sanskrit, I announced, “I shall do an M.A. in Sanskrit.” Our enlightened neighbours laughed as they had before. Some college lecturers and lawyers also joined in the joke. “How can that be possible? You may have got good marks at Matric [the final year of high school, or tenth grade]. But it isn’t so easy to do an M.A. in Sanskrit. You shouldn’t make meaningless boasts; you should know your limitations.” The discouragers said what they usually do. The point was that the people who discouraged me were all of my caste. But their words could not turn me from my purpose. I didn’t reply—I wanted to answer them by action. For that, I needed to study very hard. In order to take an M.A. in Sanskrit, I would have to go to the famous Morris College. I had heard so many things about the college from my friend’s sister. About the learned professors with their cultivated tastes, about the mischievous male students, the beautiful girls, and the huge library. My interest was limited to the professors who would teach me, and to the library. And I joined the college. . . .

I passed my B.A. The figures in my B.A. mark-sheet were worthy of high praise. I had got good marks without falling behind in any way. Not only did I have respect for my teachers’ fairness, but it made me happy too. But in human life, no joy is unmixed. It can’t be attained fully without some little blemish. . . .

And now I would be a lecturer in Sanskrit! My dreams were tinted with turquoise and edged in gold. The images I nursed about myself were taking strange shapes in my mind.

A high-paid job would come to me on a platter from the government. For I must have been the first woman from a scheduled caste to pass with distinction in Sanskrit. Every nook and cranny of my mind was filled with such hopes and expectations. But those ideas were shattered. My illusions proved as worthless as

chaff. I became despondent about the efficiency of the government. I started attending interviews in private colleges. And that was a complete farce. Some said, "But how will you stay on with us, when you've passed so well?" (In other words, they must have wanted to say, "How will you work for less pay?") In other places, the moment I had been interviewed and stepped out of the room, there would be a burst of derisive laughter. I would hear words like sharp needles: "So now even these people are to teach Sanskrit! Government Brahmins, aren't they?" And the ones who said this weren't even Brahmins, but so-called reformers from the lower castes, who considered themselves anti-Brahmin, and talked of the heritage of Jyotiba Phule, and flogged the mass of the lower castes for their narrow caste-consciousness. And yet they found it distasteful that a girl from the Mahar caste, which was one of the lower castes, should teach Sanskrit. When people like these, wearing hypocritical masks, are in responsible positions in society, it does not take even a minute for that society to fall.

Two years after my M.A., I was still unemployed. There must be many whose position is the same as mine. In my frustration I took a bold step to get out of the trap. I presented my case in writing to the Honourable Shri Jagjivan Ram, the noted Minister in the Central Cabinet. . . .

[He] placed the letter before Pandit Nehru, who was astonished by it, and sent me an award of Rs.250/-, telling me to meet the Chief Minister of Maharashtra. Accordingly the Chief Minister of that time, Yeshwantrao Chavan, sent me a telegram asking me to meet him. Within a day or two, one wire after another had electrified me into wondering who I'd suddenly become. Getting past the ranks of spearmen and macebearers at the government office was quite an ordeal. But finally I got to see the "Saheb." Now, I thought, I would get a job at once—as a clerk in the government office, at least. A naive expectation. The Chief Minister made me fulsome promises in his own style. "We'll definitely make efforts for you—but you won't get a job in minutes; it'll take us some time. We'll have to give thought to it; have to hunt out something." . . .

Waiting for a job, I passed the first year of an M.A. in English Literature. It was just an excuse to keep myself occupied. That year I got married—an inter-caste marriage. That is a story by itself—a different glimpse of the nature of Indian society. Let that be the subject of another story. The surprising thing is that two months after my marriage, I got an Assistant Lecturership in a government college. Deputy Director Sahastrabuddhe, who was on the interview board, was amazed. "How did this girl remain unemployed for two years?" Dr Kolte's good will remained a constant support here, too. Today, I am a professor in the famous college where I studied, whose very walls are imbued with the respect I felt for that institution. But one thought still pricks me: the credit for Kumud Somkuwar's job is not hers, but that of the name Kumud Pawde. I hear that a woman's surname changes to match her husband's—and so does her caste. That's why I say that the credit of being a professor of Sanskrit is that of the

presumed higher caste status of Mrs Kumud Pawde. The caste of her maiden status remains deprived.

[Kumud Pawde, "The Story of My 'Sanskrit,'" trans. Priya Adarkar, in *Poisoned Bread: Translations from Modern Marathi Dalit Literature*, ed. Arjun Dangle (Bombay: Orient Longman, 1992), 96–106.]

KANCHA ILAIAH: THE SHUDRA CRITIQUE
OF HINDU COOPTION

Kancha Ilaiah (b. 1952) is a scholar, activist, and spokesman for the rights of those traditionally considered low- or out-caste—Shudras (whom Ilaiah calls Bahujans [the Majority]) and Dalits, or Other Backward Castes and Scheduled Castes. Originally from a sheep-herding family in South India, he earned a doctorate in political science from Osmania University in Hyderabad, where he currently teaches and writes. In his most controversial book, *Why I Am Not a Hindu* (1996), Ilaiah disclaims any link, relevance, affection, or necessity among Dalits and other Backward Castes for "Hinduism." What partially prompted the publication of the book was the renewal in India in the mid-1980s of the Hindu Right, espousing a politicized, nationalist form of the Hindu tradition which, after Savarkar, has become known as "Hindutva." The "Sangh Parivar" refers to the "family" of such right-wing organizations.

I was born in a small South Indian Telangana village in the early fifties and grew up in the sixties. Our villages had undergone all the turbulence of the freedom movement as they were part of a historical struggle known as the Telangana Armed Struggle. Perhaps as part of the first generation that was born and brought up in post-colonial India, an account of my childhood experiences would also be a narrative of the cultural contradictions that we are undergoing. Village India has not changed radically from my childhood days to the present. If there are any changes, the changes are marginal. Urban India is only an extension of village India. There is a cultural continuum between village India and urban India.

Suddenly, since about 1990 the word "Hindutva" has begun to echo in our ears, day in and day out, as if everyone in India who is not a Muslim, a Christian or a Sikh is a Hindu. Suddenly I am being told that I am a Hindu. I am also told that my parents, relatives and the caste in which we were born and brought up are Hindu. This totally baffles me. In fact, the whole cultural milieu of the urban middle class—the newspapers that I read, the T.V. that I see—keeps assaulting me, morning and evening, forcing me to declare that I am a Hindu. Otherwise I am socially castigated and my environment is vitiated. Having been born in a Kurumaa (shepherd caste) family, I do not know how I can relate to the Hindu culture that is being projected through all kinds of advertising agencies. The government and the state themselves have become big advertising

agencies. Moreover the Sangh Parivar harasses us every day by calling us Hindus. In fact, the very sight of its saffron-tilak culture is a harassment to us.

The question before me now is not whether I must treat Muslims or Christians or Sikhs as enemies, as the Hindutva school wants me to do. The question is What do we, the lower Sudras and Ati-Sudras (whom I also call Dalitbahujans), have to do with Hinduism or with Hindutva itself? I, indeed not only I, but all of us, the Dalitbahujans of India, have never heard the word “Hindu”—not as a word, nor as the name of a culture, nor as the name of a religion in our early childhood days. . . .

It is for this reason that I thought I should examine the socio-economic and cultural differences between us and the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas and the Baniyas. The socio-cultural differences would be better understood if we set them in the context of the different stages of our lives—childhood, family life, market relations, power relations, the Gods and Goddesses that we respect, death, and so on. Narratives of personal experiences are the best contexts in which to compare and contrast these social forms. Personal experience brings out reality in a striking way. . . .

I was not born a Hindu for the simple reason that my parents did not know that they were Hindus. This does not mean that I was born as a Muslim, a Christian, a Buddhist, a Sikh or a Parsee. My illiterate parents, who lived in a remote South Indian village, did not know that they belonged to any religion at all. People belong to a religion only when they know that they are part of the people who worship that God, when they go to those temples and take part in the rituals and festivals of that religion. My parents had only one identity and that was their caste: they were Kurumaas. Their festivals were local, their Gods and Goddesses were local, and sometimes these were even specific to one village. No centralized religious symbols existed for them. This does not mean they were tribals. My ancestors took to life on the plains about 500 years ago. They were integrated into the village economy, paid taxes to the village panchayat or to the state administration in whichever form the administration required. As long as they were shepherds, they paid the tax in the form of *pullara* (levy for sheep-breeding). . . .

Let me now narrate how my childhood experiences were shaped. The social structure in which I first became conscious of the world around me was a Kurumaa social structure. My playmates, friends, and of course relatives, all belonged to the Kurumaa caste. Occasionally the friendship circle extended to Goudaa boys and Kaapu boys. We were friends because we were all part of the cattle-breeding youth. We took the cattle to the field and then began playing *chirragone* (our cricket), *gooleelu* (a game with marbles), *dongaata* (a hide-and-seek game), and so on. Surprisingly, whenever a Goudaa friend came to my house he would eat with us, but sit slightly apart; when we went to Kaapu homes their parents would give us food but make us sit a little distance away. While eating we were not supposed to touch each other. But later we could play

together and drink together from the rivers and streams. If we had carried our mid-day food to the cattle field, we sometimes attempted to touch each other's food, but suddenly the rules that our parents had fixed would make their appearance: we would speak insultingly of each others' castes and revert to eating separately. Within moments, however, we were together again. . . .

What further separated a Hindu from us was the nature of the consciousness of the other world, the divine and the spiritual. For children from our castes, *Jeja* (the concept of God) is introduced in the form of the moon. As children grow up, they also get acquainted with Pochamma, Polimeramma, Kattamaisamma, Kaatamaraju, Potaraju and other deities. Among Dalitbahujans, there is no concept of a temple in a definite place or form. Goddesses and Gods live in all forms and in all shapes and in different places. Every Dalitbahujan child learns at an early age about these Goddesses and Gods. The children are part of the caste congregations that take place during festivals such as Bonaalu, Chinna Panduga, Pedda Panduga, and so on. Every Dalitbahujan child learns at an early age that smallpox comes because Pochamma is angry. The rains are late because Polimeramma is angry. The village tank gets filled or does not get filled depending on the sympathies of Kattamaisamma. Crops are stolen by thieves because Potaraju is angry. For Kurumaas whether sheep and goats will prosper depends on the attitude of Beerappa, a caste-specific God. . . .

We knew nothing of Brahma, Vishnu or Eswara until we entered school. When we first heard about these figures they were as strange to us as Allah or Jehova or Jesus were. Even the name of Buddha, about whom we later learnt of as a mobilizer of Dalitbahujans against brahminical ritualism, was not known to us. . . .

A Hindu family is hierarchical. Girls must obey boys, children must obey elders. Sex and age are two determining and measuring rods of the status within the family. Children are trained not to get involved in production-related tasks, which Brahmins condemn as "Sudra" tasks. Similarly their friendship with Dalitbahujan children is censured. "Upper" castes speak of Dalitbahujans as "ugly." "Sudra" is an abusive word; "Chandala" is a much more abusive word. "Upper" caste children are taught to live differently from Dalitbahujan children, just as they are taught to despise and dismiss them. Hindu inhumanism becomes part of their early formation; hating others—the Dalitbahujans—is a part of their consciousness. . . .

Among all these castes what was unknown was reading the book, going to the temple, chanting prayers or doing the *sandhyaavandanam* (evening worship). The Bhagavad Gita is said to be a Hindu religious text. But that book was not supposed to enter our homes. Not only that, the Hindu religion and its Brahmin wisdom prohibited literacy to all of us. Till modern education and Ambedkar's theory of reservation created a small educated section among these castes, letter-learning was literally prohibited. This was a sure way of not letting the religious text enter our lives. In addition even the idol, or

murthy,-based priest or pujari-centred temple was prohibited to the young, the adult and the old from the Dalitbahujan castes. Today, though some “lower” castes are allowed into temples they can never relate to that God or Goddess. . . .

Childhood formations are important for a person—female or male—to become a full human being. But our childhoods were mutilated by constant abuse and by silence, and by a stunning silence at that. There was the conspiracy to suppress the formation of our consciousness. For hundreds of generations the violent stoppage of the entry of the written word into our homes and our lives nipped our consciousness in the very bud. Even after schools were opened to us because of independence or *swaraj*, a word which even today I fail to understand, the school teacher was against us, the textbook language was against us. Our homes have one culture and the schools have another culture. If our culture was Dalitbahujan, the culture of the school was Hindu. The gap between the two was enormous. There was no way in which one resembled the other. In fact these two cultures were poles apart. . . .

Brahmin-Baniya temples were not only far from us, but the Gods sitting and sleeping in those temples were basically set against us. There were Brahmin-Baniya houses within our villages, but the very same houses built up a culture inimical to ours. The Brahmin-Banias walked over the corpses of our culture. They were the gluttons while our parents were the poor starving people—producing everything for the Other’s comfort. Their children were the most unskilled gluttons, whereas our children were the contributors to the national economy itself. Their notion of life was unworthy of life itself, but they repeatedly told our parents that we were the most useless people. Having gone through all these stages of life, having acquired the education that enabled us to see a wider world, when we reflect upon our childhood and its processes it is nothing but anger and anguish which keep burning in our hearts.

[Kancha Ilaiah, *Why I Am Not a Hindu: A Sudra Critique of Hindutva Philosophy, Culture, and Political Economy* (Calcutta: Samya, 1996), x–xi, 1, 2, 6–7, 9, 11, 14–15, 19.]

DALIT POEMS OF RESISTANCE, REJECTION, AND HOPE FOR RECONCILIATION

In Bombay in 1972, the Dalit Panthers were formed as a revolutionary organization for the furtherance of Dalit activist goals. Modeled on the Black Panthers, who had emerged in the United States in 1966, Panthers militantly supported Dalit rights, agitated for reservation policies, and inspired a number of writers, whose poems and songs gave voice to the movement’s grievances and chronicles of suffering, demands for human rights, and dreams of a society unburdened by discrimination.

The first of the two poems below, by Marathi poet Daya Pawar (1935–1996), illustrates the Dalit reconceptualization of the Buddha as an anti-caste activist; the sec-

ond, by Gujarati poet Neerav Patel (b. 1950), asks the non-Dalit reader both to empathize with the Dalit's oppression and to join him in creating a new world.

BUDDHA
BY DAYA PAWAR (1974)

I never see you sitting in
Jeta's garden
sitting with eyes closed
in meditation, in the lotus position,
or
in the caves of Ajanta and Ellora
with stone lips sewn shut
sleeping the last sleep of your life.
I see you
walking, talking,
breathing softly, healingly,
on the sorrow of the poor, the weak,
going from hut to hut
in the life-destroying darkness,
torch in hand,
giving the sorrow
that drains the blood
like a contagious disease
a new meaning.

[*Untouchable! Voices of the Dalit Liberation Movement*, ed.
Barbara R. Joshi (London: Zed Books, 1986), 159.]

SELF-INTRODUCTION
NEERAV PATEL (1980)

be my guest someday, sawarna [high-caste Hindu].
if you want to feel the pangs of woe
come in the guise of an untouchable.
see, yonder is the way to our village from the city.
avoid that tallest mansion—
our young girls are seduced there customarily.
that landlord is the king of our village—
he would not spare even a young bitch!
don't ask for water from the public water-pots.
do you know
how to drink water with the bowl of your palms?

and don't ask for my address there—
 somebody may call you names.
 here live brahmans,
 kanbis
 kolis
 potters, blacksmiths and others.
 yes, cross that hillock beyond the boundary,
 and there appear huts buried under the tamarind trees,
 or there may be two or three dogs licking bones.
 dark and half-clad bodies:
 yes, sawarna, they are my kith and kin—
 mother is roasting beef at home,
 father is rinsing hides in the tanning-pit.
 this is my uncle
 tailoring a leather bag for kanbis.
 sister-in-law is peeling the aval stems.
 and nanki has gone with a pitcher to fetch water from the tank.
 that's all, sawarna.
 don't cover your nose with the scented handkerchief,
 you may suffocate,
 you may nauseate at the sight of squabbles.
 but see,
 here i am reading pablo neruda
 lying on the charpai under the neem tree.
 i feel some times a lone man myself
 on this island of ours.
 my father said, sawarna—
 your hic-cup was cured by the salty waters of our tanning-pit
 in your childhood.
 we can love each other
 if you can shed your orthodox skin.
 come and touch, we will make a new world—
 where there won't be any
 dust, dirt, poverty, injustice, oppression.

[*Untouchable!*, ed. Barbara R. Joshi, 41–42.]

SEEKING WOMEN'S RIGHTS: FULFILLING CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES

Perhaps the three issues that have most animated post-Independence activism in India are those of caste discrimination, the status of women, and Hindu–Muslim communalism. Successive governments have ordered commissions to report on the plight of low castes, women, and Muslims, and in each case the

reports have mandated changes, some of which have encountered fierce resistance on the grounds that they are attacks on basic Indian social structure or religious practices as guaranteed in the Constitution.

Rammohan Roy, the famous reformer whose writings are quoted in the second chapter of this volume, early in the nineteenth century wrote that “the male part of the community” argued that women could not be given the rights to which they were entitled by human nature because they were regarded by men as not only weaker physically but also inferior in understanding to men. Then he asked his male audience the question of which the official report on the status of women in India of 1974 is a kind of extended comment: “When did you ever afford them a fair opportunity of exhibiting their natural capacity?” Selections from the writings of activists Madhu Kishwar and Asghar Ali Engineer provide further commentary on the challenges to Indian policies toward and treatment of women.

TOWARD EQUALITY: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

In the years before Independence, there were demands from many quarters—religious reformers, humanitarians, women’s organizations—that when India became free, one of the urgent priorities should be consideration of the status of women, especially the disabilities and discriminations that were embedded in the structure of society and the legal system. The chief of such legal barriers, many believed, was the system of personal laws—that is, the body of laws governing marriage, inheritance, the adoption of children, and the power of husbands over wives within marriage. These laws and their application were governed by the religious community to which an individual belonged, not by laws common to all citizens. The British made sweeping changes in civil, criminal, and commercial law, but they moved with extreme caution in the field of personal law, because they feared that such interference would lead to violent opposition that would threaten their rule. Also, the British ruling classes regarded private morality as a concern of the religious authorities, not the state. Such reasoning led the East India Company to decree, early in the nineteenth century, an easy solution: “In all suits regarding inheritance, marriage and caste and other religious usages and institutions, the laws of the Koran with respect to Mahomedans, and those of the Shaster [Hindu religious texts] with respect to Gentoos [Hindus] shall be invariably adhered to.”⁹ This remained more-or-less true right up to Independence, but even when not verbalized, the thrust toward equality for women was implicit in the thinking of many of the leaders of the freedom movement.

In the Constitution, the State was directed to “endeavour to secure for its citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India” (Directive Principles, Part IV, section 44). The State was also to direct its policy toward equal pay for equal work for both men and women. There was an escape clause, however, for while the principles behind the directives were “fundamental to the governance of the country,” they were not enforceable in the courts (section 37). The fact that in the early 1970s a

commission was established by the government of India, with the involvement of leading Indian women social scientists, to investigate the status of women and to suggest how the constitutional guarantees of equality for women could be put into practice, is a fascinating case study in Indian social history.

As of the beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century, many of the problems identified in the 1974 Report of the Committee on the Status of Women were still unsolved, in spite of welcome additional legislation. For instance, dowry has proven to be a continuing and significant custom. After the failure of the 1961 Dowry Prohibition Act, and after over two decades of activist struggle, in 1985 the act was amended to make dowry demands an actionable offense, with harsher punishments. However, dowry-related deaths have continued to escalate. The same is true of female child sex ratios, which have been in free fall since 1961, when there were 976 girls for every 1,000 boys under six. In 2011 the number was the worst ever, at 914 girls to 1,000 boys.

According to Veena Oldenburg, however, there are some encouraging developments for women's rights in India. First, there is "a growing acknowledgment among feminist activists that dowry is not the sole cause of violence against women or even of dowry murders."¹⁰ In addition, three amendments to the Indian Penal Code in 1983 recognized cruelty to women, of both mental and physical kinds, and whether leading to death or not, as a cognizable and nonbailable offense. Moreover, for the first time, in a landmark bill in 2005, Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, and Sikh daughters were given equal rights in the inheritance of property. The degree to which such legal provisions are known about and enforced, of course, will determine the benefit of such positive legislation.

Sectional numbers have been left for ease of reference to the original—very lengthy—document.

The review of the disabilities and constraints on women, which stem from socio-cultural institutions, indicates that the majority of women are still very far from enjoying the rights and opportunities guaranteed to them by the Constitution. . . . The increasing incidence of practices like dowry indicate a further lowering of the status of women. They also indicate a process of regression from some of the norms developed during the Freedom Movement. . . . We, therefore, urge that community organisations, particularly women's organisations, should mobilise public opinion and strengthen social efforts against oppressive institutions like polygamy, dowry, ostentatious expenditure on wedding and child marriage, and mount a campaign for the dissemination of information about the legal rights of women to increase their awareness. This is a joint responsibility which has to be shared by community organisations, legislators who have helped to frame these laws and the Government which is responsible for implementing them. . . .

WOMEN AND THE LAW (CHAPTER IV)

2. Eradication of Polygamy in Muslim Law: Full equality of sexes can hardly be possible in a legal system which permits polygamy and a social system which tolerates it. The only personal law, which has remained impervious to the changing trend from polygamy to monogamy is Muslim Law. . . . Government has taken no steps towards changing the law for over two decades on the view that public opinion in the Muslim community did not favour a change. This view cannot be reconciled with the declaration of equality and social justice.

3. Enforcement of Provision Against Bigamy under Hindu Marriage Act: In our opinion the right to initiate prosecution for bigamy should be extended to persons other than the girl's family with prior permission of the Court to prevent the current wide-spread violation of a most salutary provision of the law which very clearly lays down the social policy of the country. . . .

5. Restraint of Child Marriages: a) When the legal age of marriage in case of a female is below the age of discretion she cannot be expected to form an intelligent opinion about her partner in life. . . . Child marriage is one of the significant factors leading to the high incidence of suicide among young married women in India. Therefore, increasing the marriage age of girls to eighteen years is desirable. . . . c) There are large-scale violations of the Child Marriage Restraint Act, particularly in the rural areas. . . . We recommend that all offences under the Child Marriage Restraint Act should be made cognizable, and special officers appointed to enforce the law. . . .

6. Registration of Marriages: Compulsory registration of marriages as recommended by the United Nations will be an effective check on child and bigamous marriages. . . .

7. Prevention of Dowry: The Dowry Prohibition Act 1961 has signally failed to achieve its purpose. In spite of the persistent growth of this practice there are practically no cases reported under the Act. There is hardly any evidence of social conscience in this regard in the country today. The educated youth is grossly indifferent to the evil and unashamedly contributes to its perpetuation. . . .

8. Improvement of Laws of Divorce: The concept of "union for life" or the sacramental nature of marriage which renders the marriage indissoluble has gradually been eroded and through legislation the right on divorce has been introduced in all legal systems in India, but the same variations and unequal treatment of sexes characterises this branch of law also. . . . We recommend that mutual consent as a ground for divorce should be recognised in all the personal laws so that two adults whose marriage has, in fact, broken down can get it dissolved honourably.

9. Adoption: (a) We recommend that the right of adoption should be equal for husband and wife, with the consent of the other spouse. . . .

10. Guardianship: We recommend—That the question of guardianship should be determined entirely from the point of view of the child's interest and not the prior right of either parent.

11. Maintenance: The provision for maintenance in the Criminal Procedure Code continues to reflect the old attitude to women. . . . Under Muslim law the wife's right to maintenance lasts only as long as she remains a wife. If she is divorced, she loses her right and is only entitled to maintenance for 3 months. This has created discrimination between the Muslim and other Indian women. We recommend the removal of this discrimination and extension of right of maintenance to divorced wives. . . .

12. Inheritance: (a) The Indian Succession Act confers no restrictions on the power of a person to will away his property. . . . There is a need to incorporate some restriction on the right of testation, similar to that prevailing under Muslim law to prevent a widow from being left completely destitute. . . .

13. Family Courts: We strongly recommend the abandonment of the established adversary system for settlement of family problems, and establishment of Family Courts which will adopt conciliatory methods and informal procedure, aiming to achieve socially desirable results.

15. Uniform Civil Code: The absence of a uniform civil code 27 years after independence is an incongruity which cannot be justified with all the emphasis that is placed on secularism, science and modernisation. The continuance of various personal laws which discriminate between men and women violates the Fundamental Rights and the Preamble to the Constitution which promises equality of status to all citizens. It is also against the spirit of national integration and secularism. . . . We recommend expeditious implementation of the constitutional directive of Article 44 by the adoption of a Uniform Civil Code.

16. Needed Reforms in Criminal Law: *a) Consent to sexual intercourse:* In our view consent to have sexual intercourse requires more maturity than to have an abortion. The same limit should be applied in both cases. We recommend that the age of consent below which a girl's consent to sexual intercourse is not legal should be 18. . . . *c) Adultery:* Adultery in our opinion should be regarded only as a matrimonial offence, the remedy for which may be sought in divorce or separation. Retention of this as a criminal offence brings out clearly the values of the last century which regarded the wife as the husband's property. . . .

ROLES, RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION (CHAPTER V)

The Indian Constitution guarantees equality of opportunity in matters relating to employment and directs the State to secure equal rights to an adequate means of livelihood, equal pay for equal work and just and humane conditions of work. The impact of transition to a modern economy has meant the exclu-

sion of an increasing number and proportion of women from active participation in the productive process. A considerable number continue to participate for no return and no recognition. . . . Prejudices regarding women's efficiency, productivity, capacity for skills and suitability debar them from employment in many areas, and result in wage discrimination. The criteria for determining their unsuitability for particular types of jobs are not clear or uniform. Recasting the employment policy for women requires re-examination of existing theories regarding their suitability for different types of work on scientific lines, and deliberate efforts to promote equality of opportunity by special attention to women's disability and handicaps. . . .

EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR WOMEN (CHAPTER VI)

Social attitudes to the education of girls range from acceptance of the need to one of . . . absolute indifference. The number of illiterate women has increased from 61 million in 1950-51 to 215 million in 1970-71.

31. The challenge of the widening illiteracy gap will have to be borne in mind in determining priorities in educational development in the years to come. The claims of the formal educational system which can cater to the need of only a minority for a long time will have to be balanced against the claims of eradication of illiteracy. This stands out as the most important and imperative need to raise the status of women who are already adults and constitute the largest group. . . . Imbalances in women's education and literacy are the consequences of great disparity of educational progress between rural and urban areas, between different sections of the population and between regions, which reflect, to a great extent, variations in regional attitudes to women. . . . The influence of these and other sociological factors . . . which, for instance, influence the low educational development among Muslim women or women of Scheduled Castes and Tribes, . . . make the use of national or state averages in assessing progress of education or literacy rather meaningless.

42. Equality of Sexes as a Major Value to be Inculcated through the Educational Process. The educational system is the only institution which can counteract traditional belief in inequality of sexes. The educational system today has not even attempted to undertake this responsibility. . . .

Though women's participation in the political process has increased . . . their ability to produce an impact on the political process has been negligible because of the inadequate attention paid to their political education and mobilisation by both political parties and women's organisations. Parties have tended to see women voters as appendages of the males. . . .

43. Women's Panchayats: We therefore recommend the establishment of Statutory Women's Panchayats at the village level with autonomy and resources of their own for the management and administration of welfare and development programmes for women and children, as a transitional measure, to break through

the traditional attitudes that inhibit most women from articulating their problems and participating actively in the existing local bodies.

[*Towards Equality: Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India*
(New Delhi: Government of Education and Social Welfare, 1974),
selection from recommendations, 359–374.]

MADHU KISHWAR: REALITY FOR WOMEN IN POLITICS

Madhu Kishwar (b. 1959) is the editor of *Manushi*, an influential journal published in Delhi that concentrates on issues affecting the position of women in Indian society. The journal's hard-hitting, well-researched articles have highlighted many of the problems raised in the official report on the status of women excerpted above. Kishwar and her colleagues are often accused of exaggerating conditions, but they are also widely credited with focusing attention on the barriers to the full equality of women in India.

A key component of politics is the art of building alliances. In a culture where even formal interaction with men unconnected to one's own family is frowned upon, women are severely handicapped in politics because they cannot cultivate close association with men without jeopardising their position in the family. A woman operating on her own strength in a party filled with corrupt politicians who think nothing of slandering their own women colleagues would find the going very tough, even if she can somehow mobilise other compensatory resources by her own special efforts. . . . The fact that politics is dominated by the most unsavoury kind of men makes most women themselves reluctant to break taboos regarding free intermixing with men. A woman risks her reputation by even being seen with many of them, whereas a man does not have to prove his credentials by such fierce avoidance. . . .

Thus women are handicapped from getting crucial information which men pick up easily from casual gossip with all kinds of people. So much of our politics is carried out in late night sessions, often over booze, where deals are made and strategies planned. Most women politicians, including the corrupt ones, don't dare to be seen participating in such sessions. . . .

Even in educated middle class neighbourhoods of Delhi, *mohalla* [neighbourhood] associations are usually run by men. While a few families are willing to relax some restrictions on women and are supportive of their activism, the workload of women and the nature of their domestic responsibilities make it extremely hard for them to spare the kind of time required for making even a small difference in politics. . . .

Men enjoy meeting officials, having *chai-pani* [tea and snacks] with them, because that is how they build contacts which can be encashed for personal benefit in various ways. But women are always in a hurry to get back. They don't want to hang around gossiping in tea shops, chatting with officials . . . all of which seem to be a necessary part of men's political world. . . .

As long as working in the political realm involves endless petition mongering to uncaring, unaccountable authorities, as long as decision-making remains remote and in the hands of bureaucrats, as long as politics cannot be easily integrated into the everyday life of people without causing severe disturbances in domestic life, men are likely to control and dominate it. . . .

By keeping more than three-quarters of India's women illiterate and providing shamelessly poor quality education to the few who manage to reach *sarkari* schools, the government plays a crucial role in discouraging and obstructing women's participation in public affairs. Even for participation at the *panchayat* level, it is no longer possible for an illiterate person to function effectively because the *sarkari panchayats* have been integrated into the vast bureaucratic network, with its reams of forms to fill out and its dust-covered volumes of rules and procedures.

Most women, especially those who are uneducated, feel helpless and lost when they are required to deal with the impenetrable maze of the bureaucratic world which defines the parameters of the *panchayat's* role. What appears to be a woman *panchayat* member's incapacity is actually proof of our system's ridiculous procedures and insensitivity to people's requirements.

What goes by the name of politics in our country is an overly time consuming and debased activity. Even for those who are honest and sincere in their work, the nature of our political institutions makes it very difficult to make a real difference. Nothing comes to our citizens without *sifarish* [bribery] and influence because the government encroaches on too many aspects of our lives in negative ways. . . .

Considering all this, it is perhaps not a coincidence that the few women who have developed an independent political base and are able to compete with men in electoral politics are mostly single or widowed. . . . These women are able to give their undivided attention to politics because there is no man to hold them back and, therefore, they are not easily cowed down by scandal or character assassination. . . . The more successful among women politicians do not like to be seen as representing women's interests. It is unfortunate that by and large only those who find it hard to maintain a secure foothold for themselves in elective politics tend to gravitate towards women's issues. Our democracy will become more meaningful when ordinary women can take part in political deliberations without having to make heroic sacrifices and prove themselves stronger than men over and over again. . . . Therefore, it is crucially important for women to have more leisure for them to want to participate in politics. They tend to prefer political work that doesn't take them too far away from home on a regular basis. Thus women can be effective only in decentralised polities where decisions affecting people's lives can be taken locally. . . . All this only goes to underscore the fact that the problem is far more complex than simply that Indian women are lagging behind due to discrimination. We have to make politics worthy of women, tune it sensitively to their requirements or else

even with reserved seats, only those who become like sari-wearing men will be able to survive in politics.

[Madhu Kishwar, "Women's Marginal Role in Politics,"
Manushi 97 (Nov.–Dec. 1996): 16–18, 19, 20, 21.]

ASGHAR ALI ENGINEER: AN INDIAN MUSLIM REFORMER ON THE PLIGHT OF WOMEN

Asghar Ali Engineer (1939–2013) was an Indian scholar and activist, internationally known for his progressive views on communal relations, women's autonomy, Indian secularism, and reform in Islam. Before his early retirement in 1972, he worked as a civil engineer, but since then he has played a major public role in Hindu–Muslim relations. In 1980 he established the Institute of Islamic Studies, in Bombay, to create a platform for progressive Muslims in India, and in 1993 he founded the Centre for the Study of Society and Secularism, to promote communal harmony. He has authored over fifty books, in addition to numerous articles. The selections below are from an essay called "Women's Plight in Muslim Society."

Imrana's case from U.P. and Ayesha Azmi's case from London are very much in the media's glare these days.¹¹ Earlier in the eighties of the twentieth century the Shah Bano case remained in the media headlines for months. There is no doubt that the media pays more than needed attention when it comes to Muslim women. Muslims always complain about this extraordinary interest that the media, both electronic and print, takes in Muslim women's matters.

Having said this I must say Muslims have to do serious thinking on what goes on in their society. Let them reflect honestly if they follow the Qur'anic injunctions about women honestly. They time and again show their emotional attachment to the Qur'an but when it comes to the practice of the Qur'anic teachings, they are less than honest, and particularly so when it relates to women.

The Muslim 'Ulama are largely responsible for the plight of Muslims in all Muslim societies, whichever country they belong to. They are under great influence of patriarchal values of the society they live in, rather than the Qur'anic values. *The entire Qur'anic discourse on women is right-based and for men duty-based.* However, the 'Ulama have reversed it, and for them the entire discourse about women is duty-based and for men is right-based. So much for their honesty to the Qur'an.

The Imrana case has again attracted media attention because of the fatwa issued by Darul 'Ulum Deoband and also by the village Panchayat. One can understand the behaviour of the village Panchayat, as it is not an Islamic authority, but one is greatly saddened by the fatwa issued by Darul 'Ulum Deoband, the great Islamic seminary second only to Al-Azhar, in importance.

Imrana, wife of a rickshaw driver from Muzaffarnagar district in U.P., was raped by her father-in-law. Ali Mohammad, the father-in-law who raped her, has been convicted, and the act of rape has been established. The 'Ulama, before the court verdict came, had even doubted her allegations against her father-in-law and had said that it was a property dispute and she was making false allegation against her father-in-law to take revenge. However, they said, if at all she has been raped, she should divorce her husband and marry another man, as she had sexual intercourse with the father of her husband.

The 'Ulama was hardly bothered about the fact that she was raped and it was not consensual sex. Had she had consensual sex with him, it would have been entirely different matter. If she has been raped, how can she be blamed? One should have all the sympathy for her and punishment should be given to her father-in-law. Instead our 'Ulama are for punishing her. They are not even taking the fact into account that she has five children from her husband and if she obtains divorce who will look after them? One of her daughters has reached marriageable age.

In rural India a woman cannot afford to defy a fatwa, justified or not. She has to live in that society and arrange the marriages of her children. Those who face boycott, they alone know the consequences. Our 'Ulama, without bothering to study the actual situation and the context, just open their Shari'ah books and mechanically issue fatwas. They are totally shy of applying the principle of *ijtihad*, which means the creative re-interpretation of Shari'ah rulings. The Prophet (PBUH) had himself encouraged Mu'adh, whom he had appointed as governor of Yemen, to practice *ijtihad*.

Unfortunately our 'Ulama come from a poor and backward society and have no knowledge of modern society and its dynamics. They never dare to think out of the box. They have been trained only to study classical Shari'ah. They even do not know that great Imams themselves differed from each other while giving their opinion on the same question. For example, Imam Abu Hanifa, who was a great legal genius and thinker, maintained that what is *haram* (prohibited) cancels what is *halal* (permissible). Thus according to the Hanafi School if Imrana has been raped which is *haram*, the rape will cancel her *nikah* (marriage) which is permissible.

On the other hand, Imam Shafi'i, another great jurist, is of the opposite opinion—i.e. what is *haram* cannot cancel what is *halal* which, in Imrana's case, would mean that her being raped by her father-in-law which is *haram* cannot cancel her *nikah*, which is *halal*. . . . Had the fatwa been obtained from a Shafi'i *mufti* he would have declared her *nikah* as intact. . . .

There are several such women's issues on which one or the other Shari'ah school is more favourable than the other. For example, triple divorce in one sitting is not valid in the Ahl-e-Hadith School, whereas it is allowed both in Hanafi as well as Shafi'i School. Thus this provision from Ahl-e-Hadith could

be incorporated to abolish triple divorce in one sitting. Such compilation will greatly ease Muslim women's position in India. . . . But there is total stagnation in Shari'ah laws in India and women continue to suffer.

Our 'Ulama simply consult their school of jurisprudence and issue fatwas without caring about the consequences. No wonder then that [the] whole world thinks that Islam oppresses its women and, what is worse, refuses to accept any change in the medieval formulations by the Islamic jurists. Our 'Ulama declare Shari'ah laws as divine to stall any attempt to change and to win Muslims in favour of no change.

It is simply not true. Shari'ah is by no means immutable. It is [a] product of human thinking, as much as divine laws given by the Qur'an. At best it can be said to be [a] human approach to understanding and applying divine injunctions. Thus one can say Shari'ah is semi-divine and must change in as much as it is human. The conditions in which the great Imams thought have changed considerably and one has to think again in a new context.

Today women are active agents in the society and are greatly aware of their rights. Women during the Holy Prophet's time were also very active on various fronts and fought their way even into men's world. Often the Prophet consulted his wives from important tasks and assigned them important work including leading prayers in their house. They also actively participated in battles and worked as nurses on battlefields. . . .

India is a democracy and all have fundamental rights to freely express themselves. It is not a closed society dominated by 'Ulama that one will accept all they say without critically examining it. The *ibadat* (matters pertaining to worship and matters relating to [the] hereafter) should not be subject to any change but matters pertaining to *mu'amalat* (between one human being and another) must be subject to change. Only Qur'anic values will remain immutable, values like justice ('*adl*), benevolence (*ihsan*), compassion (*rahmah*) and wisdom (*hikmah*).

If the 'Ulama do not show sensitiveness to others' suffering and continue to remain rigid, they will not serve the cause of Islam, much less that of women.

[Asgar Ali Engineer, *Communalism in Secular India: A Minority Perspective* (Gurgaon: Hope India, 2007), 92–96. Slightly emended for English.]

MUSLIMS IN POST-INDEPENDENCE INDIA

Although the vision of a secular India was built upon a commitment to the religious freedoms of the country's minorities, the experience of Muslims, who make up approximately 12–13 percent of the population of India, has not been uniformly positive. Indeed, as the Sachar Report of 2006 indicates, the Muslim community fares as badly as, or worse than, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, in terms of socioeconomic and educational achievement.

THE SACHAR COMMISSION AND INDIAN MUSLIMS

In November 2006 the Commission on the Social, Economic, and Educational Status of the Muslim Community, chaired by Justice Rajindar Sachar, submitted its 403-page report. It was the first such report focused exclusively on Indian Muslims in the post-Independence period and highlighted their relative economic, educational, and political lag. While Muslims form the largest minority community in the country and boast a significant number of high achievers, as a group they nevertheless suffer from neglect, backwardness, and a feeling of disempowerment.

The commission thoroughly investigated the state of the Muslims by studying sixty districts in detail and gathering general material covering the entire all-India community. Although faced with opposition from the BJP and Hindu communal organizations, who derided the commission and who claimed that the Muslims were a pampered and dangerous section of the population, the commission members completed their important survey, analyzed their findings, and included a host of recommendations about how India's political leadership at every level might go about improving the status, educational level, and self-confidence of India's Muslims. The six-member Commission included, aside from Sachar, Saiyid Hamid, T. K. Oommen, M. A. Basith, Akhtar Majeed, Abu Saleh Shariff, and Rakesh Basant.

CHAPTER ONE: CONTEXT, APPROACH, AND METHODOLOGY

. . . Since Independence, India has achieved significant growth and development. It has also been successful in reducing poverty and improving crucial human development indicators such as levels of literacy, education, and health. There are indications, however, that not all religious communities and social groups (henceforth socio-religious communities—SRCs) have shared equally the benefits of the growth process. Among these, the Muslims, the largest minority community in the country, constituting 13.4 per cent of the population, are seriously lagging behind in terms of most of the human development indicators. While the perception of deprivation is widespread among Muslims, there has been no systematic effort since Independence to analyze the condition of religious minorities in the country. Despite the need to analyze the socio-economic and educational conditions of different SRCs, until recently appropriate data for such an analysis was not generated by Government agencies. There have been welcome changes in the scope of data collection with respect to SRCs in the 1990, which, in turn, has made this report possible. The current effort is the first of its kind to undertake a data-based research on the Muslims of India. . . .

CHAPTER FOUR: EDUCATIONAL CONDITIONS OF MUSLIMS

. . . Relative deprivation in education of Muslims vis-à-vis other SRCs calls for a significant shift in the policy of the State, along with the creation of effective

partnership with private and voluntary sectors. Given the vastness of the population to be served and the limited resources available with policy makers, the emphasis on provisioning of a minimum level of school education by the State seems justified. . . . Muslims have not been able to sufficiently reap the benefits of state intervention and growth in education. . . .

With regard to school education, the condition of Muslims is one of grave concern. The data clearly indicates that while the overall levels of education in India, measured through various indicators, is still below universally acceptable standards, the educational status of the Muslim community in particular is a matter of great concern. . . . Both the Mean Years of Schooling (MYS) and attendance levels of Muslims are low in absolute terms and in contrast to all SRCs except in some cases SCs/STs. In fact, in several contexts, SCs/STs are found to have overtaken Muslims.

While there is a significant rural–urban differential, it was observed that the gap between Muslims and the other SRCs is generally higher in urban areas than in rural areas. . . .

Analysis of time trends indicate that, despite overall improvement in educational status, the rate of progress has been the slowest for Muslims. . . . Indeed, the gap between Muslims and the advantaged sections has actually widened since Independence, and particularly since the 1980s. In fact, a steady divergence in the level of achievement has seen traditionally under-privileged SCs/STs catching up and overtaking Muslims in several contexts. The last point is of special importance as at the time of Independence, the socio-economic position of SCs/STs was recognized to be inferior to that of Muslims.

Moreover, the recent trends in enrolments and other educational attainments and Committee's interactions with the Muslim Community are adequate to dispel certain misconceptions and stereotypes with respect to education of Muslims. . . .

Muslims parents are not averse to modern or mainstream education and to sending their children to the affordable Government schools. They do not necessarily prefer to send children to Madrasas. . . . A section of Muslims also prefer education through the English medium, while some others would like the medium of instruction to be Urdu. The access to government schools for Muslims children is limited.

There is also a common belief that Muslim parents feel that education is not important for girls and that it may instill a wrong set of values. Even if girls are enrolled, they are withdrawn at an early age to marry them off. This leads to a higher drop-out rate among Muslim girls. Our interactions indicate that the problem may lie in non-availability of schools within easy reach for girls at lower levels of education, absence of girls' hostels, absence of female teachers and availability of scholarships as they move up the education ladder.

CHAPTER 8: POVERTY, CONSUMPTION,
AND STANDARDS OF LIVING

... The analysis of differentials in poverty across SRCs shows that Muslims face fairly high levels of poverty. Their conditions on the whole are only slightly better than those of SCs/STs. As compared to rural areas, Muslims face much higher relative deprivation in urban areas. Over time changes in poverty levels also show that the economic conditions of Muslims in urban areas have not improved as much as the other SRCs. ...

While there are variations in the conditions of Muslims across states, the situation of the community in urban areas seems to be particularly bad in relative terms in almost all states except Kerala, Assam, Tamil Nadu, Orissa, Himachal Pradesh, and Punjab. ...

CHAPTER 10: THE MUSLIM OBCS AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

As per the latest round of NSSO survey, Muslim OBCs constitute 40.7% of the total Muslim population. They are also a sizable component (15.7%) of the total OBC population of the country. The NSSO survey however fails to provide disaggregated figures across individual castes/groups included in the OBC lists of the Centre and the various states. As a result, inter-OBC differentials along castes/groups in terms of crucial indicators such as educational attainment and employment share cannot be estimated. The Committee therefore is of the opinion that enumeration of castes/groups as part of the decennial Census exercise is critical to assess the equitable distribution of benefits meant for groups included in the category, OBC. ...

While Hindu-OBCs continue to be relatively deprived in terms of the all-India data, the Muslim community as a whole is lagging behind Hindu-OBCs. However, overall, the conditions of Muslim-OBCs are worse than those of Muslim-Gen. The abysmally low representation of Muslim OBCs suggests that the benefits of entitlements meant for the backward classes are yet to reach them. ...

Based on the arguments and data presented here, it is logical to suggest that Muslims in India, in terms of their social structure, consist of three groups—ashrafs, ajlafs, and arzals. The three groups require different types of affirmative action. The second group, ajlafs/OBCs, need additional attention which could be similar to that of Hindu-OBCs. The third group, those with similar traditional occupations as that of the SCs, may be designated as Most Backward Classes (MBCs), as they need multifarious measures, including reservation, as they are “cumulatively oppressed.”

CHAPTER 12: LOOKING AHEAD: PERSPECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report has probed the question of whether different socio-religious categories (SRCs) in India have had an equal chance to reap the benefits of development, with a focus on Muslims in India. It was stated at the outset that minorities have to grapple with issues relating to identity, equality, and equity. It was also recognized that these three sets of issues are inter-related. But since the mandate of this Committee is primarily on equity, the Report essentially deals with relative deprivation of Muslims vis-à-vis other SRCs in various dimensions of development. It may also be useful to recall the distinction made in the introductory chapter between issues that are common to all poor people and those that are specific to minorities, especially Muslims.

Our analysis shows that while there is considerable variation in the conditions of Muslims across states (and among the Muslims, those who identified themselves as OBCs and others), the Community exhibits deficits and deprivations in practically all dimensions of development. In fact, by and large, Muslims rank somewhat above SCs/STs but below Hindu-OBCs, Other Minorities, and Hindu-General (mostly upper castes) in almost all indicators considered. Among states that have large Muslim populations, the situation is particularly grave in the states of West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Assam. Interestingly, despite such deficits, the Community has lower infant mortality rates and sex-ratios. In addition to the “development deficit,” the perception among Muslims that they are discriminated against and excluded is widespread, which exacerbates the problem.

The Committee strongly suggests that the policies to deal with the relative deprivation of the Muslims in the country should sharply focus on inclusive development and “mainstreaming” of the Community while respecting diversity. There is an urgent need to recognize diversity in residential, work, and educational spaces, apart from enhancing inclusion of the really deprived SRCs in “spaces” created by public programmes and policy interventions. The need for equity and inclusion in a pluralistic society can never be overemphasized. But the mechanisms to ensure equity and equality of opportunity to bring about inclusion should be such that diversity is achieved and at the same time the perception of discrimination is eliminated. This is only possible when the importance of Muslims as an intrinsic part of the diverse Indian social mosaic is squarely recognized.

[http://minorityaffairs.gov.in/sites/upload_files/moma/files/pdfs/sachar_comm.pdf,
1-2, 84-85, 161-162, 213-214, 237-238.]

ASGHAR ALI ENGINEER: A MUSLIM'S REACTIONS TO SACHAR

Immediately upon the release of the Sachar Commission Report, Engineer penned the following short essay, entitled "Indian Muslims: Reservation or No Reservation?," published the following year.

Indian Muslims are very much in news these days after the Sacchar Committee Report was submitted to the Prime Minister. Though it has not revealed anything new about Indian Muslims, yet since its contents are under discussion, much light is being shed on their plight. Before the Sacchar Committee, Indira Gandhi had appointed the Gopal Singh High Power Committee in 1980, which had submitted its report to Mrs. Gandhi in 1982.

The Gopal Singh Committee had also worked hard to collect valuable data and made concrete suggestions for improving the economic condition of Muslims. However, the report was an election gimmick and was not even tabled in Parliament, let alone implemented in right earnest. When I suggested to Shri V. P. Singh when he was Prime Minister, in a Muslim leaders' and intellectuals' meeting to implement the report, V. P. Singh said, which Gopal Singh Report? He did not know that such a report was submitted to the Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi. He promised to table the report in the next session of Parliament, but his Government fell on the Question of Babri Masjid. The Report remained in the cold storage. . . .

The report has been submitted to the Prime Minister Shri Manmohan Singh. The data of course is embarrassing for the Government as it shows Muslims have slipped even below dalits in government jobs and poverty line and literacy level. The national literacy average is around 65%, whereas among Muslims it is around 59 percent. The share of Muslims in govt. jobs in almost all states is far below their population.

In Assam their population is 30.9 percent whereas their percentage in government jobs is just 11.2. Shockingly, with all left front governments' commitment to minorities, the percentage of Muslims in West Bengal government jobs is just 4.2 percent, though their population in that state is 25.2 percent. In Kerala Muslim percentage in government jobs is 10.4, as against their population of 24.7 percent. In the largest state of Uttar Pradesh their share in jobs is 5.1 percent though their population there is 18.5 percent.

In Bihar their plight is a shade better with 7.6 percent share in government jobs whereas their population is 16.5 percent. In Delhi, under the very nose of Central Government, their share in government jobs is 3.2 as against their population of 11.7 percent. Not so surprisingly their plight in Southern states like Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka is far better, with 8.8 and 8.5 per, cent respectively, whereas their population in these two states is 9.2 and 12.3 percent. Gujarat also is not so disappointing with share of Muslims in government jobs being 5.4 percent as against their population of 9.1 percent. . . .

Now the important question is who is to blame? Muslims, their leadership, or the government? I think the question is very complex. Firstly, most of the Muslims in India are converts from various dalit, OBC and artisan castes. They were poor before conversion and remained poor after conversion.

Even the ruling-class Muslims during the medieval ages had absolutely no sympathy with these low-caste Muslims. They were referred to as *ajlaf* or *kamin zaten* (Muslims of lowly origin) and shunned. These low-caste Muslims never acquired higher status in the caste-ridden society of India. Short of untouchability, every other evil was there. Thus one reason for their low economic status is historical in nature.

Secondly, the partition of the country delivered a hard blow to Indian Muslims. The upper feudal class Muslims and Muslims belonging to middle and upper middle classes and those holding higher posts in ICS [Indian Civil Service], IPS [Indian Police Service], Army etc. migrated to Pakistan leaving mostly poor and illiterate Muslims behind. These poor Muslims had no role in creating Pakistan and they had no advantage in migrating to Pakistan and hence they remained here. This is another cause of poverty among Muslims today in India. . . .

The new middle class . . . needs very high qualifications and has to face tough competition in this global economy. With no influence and no facilities to equip themselves with high-class education for new jobs, they need greater educational facilities. Neither government has done much for them nor their own leaders are interested in helping them. . . .

About the government, the less said the better. All secular parties including the Congress and Janata Dal and others who swear by secularism have not done anything concrete for poor and downtrodden Muslims. They do announce some schemes at the time of elections to lure them for votes, but all those schemes are quietly dumped as soon as elections are over. No one even mentions them.

No one knows what will be the fate of Sacchar Committee Report also. This time media has given wide coverage to it. Elections in important states like U.P. are due, and the Muslim vote in U.P. plays important role. It all depends how Muslim leaders bargain with various parties.

One important question is whether Dalit Muslims should be given reservations like Hindu Dalits. The Sacchar Committee has wisely avoided recommending reservation, though it has recommended an equal opportunity commission to be set up like the one in the U.K. and other countries. Short of reservation, the Committee wants government to make all possible efforts to recruit Muslims and expand job opportunities for them. In this competitive age, without especial efforts, it is very difficult to get them jobs. . . .

If Muslim leaders demand reservation for Dalit Muslims, there will be stiff opposition not only from the Sangh Parivar but also from many secularists. Reservation does not evoke favourable response even for Dalits and OBCs. For

Muslims it will evoke huge opposition and will push up communal tension. It will provide Sangh Parivar with an issue they are eagerly looking for.

Also, strangely enough, some Muslim leaders themselves oppose reservation for Dalit Muslims saying there is no caste system among Muslims and if reservation is to be given it should be given for entire Muslim community. It will not be accepted even for Dalit Muslims, let alone the entire community. And in either case one has to amend the Constitution, as reservations are provided for on a caste basis in the Constitution, not on religion basis. To amend it one needs support from all political parties, which will obviously not be coming forth.

Thus best thing will be, as recommended by the Sacchar Committee, to set up equal opportunity commission and also provide additional facilities for education and coaching to Muslims. Also, artisans should get low rate interest from nationalised banks; it will greatly boost the economic situation of artisans who have to borrow from private lenders at very high rates of interest. Government should make it obligatory for nationalised and even private sector banks to reserve funds to lend to the poor dalits and minorities at low rate of interest.

Also, the left parties have suggested that all departments of the government, state as well as Centre, should spend at least 15% for Muslims and Left Front Government has already taken decision to do so. Thus Left Front Government of West Bengal has shown the way. . . . Expenditure from the budget on Muslims in proportion to their population is a much better alternative to reservation.

[Engineer, *Communalism in Secular India*, 102–107.
Slightly emended for English.]

HINDU NATIONALISM, COMMUNALISM, AND SECULARISM

When the word “secular” was added by an amendment to the Preamble to the Constitution in 1976 so that it defined the Indian nation as “secular, socialist, and democratic,” those who supported the change saw it as a necessary defense against the two other forces in this section’s title: Hindu nationalism and communalism. Some saw secularism as the ideal for which India should strive; others, as a betrayal of all that Indian civilization and the Indian nation stand for. What is clear is that the meaning of the word has moved far from its everyday English usage of “not religious,” to encompass a multitude of issues of great importance to Indian national life. It has been at the heart of many discussions about the unity of India, the nature of Indian nationalism, Indian nationality, freedom of religion, toleration, communalism, separation of religion and the state, and what it means to be a modern nation. During the first sixty years after Independence, all the many connotations of the word “secular” kept surfacing in Indian political and social discourse in civil society, just as they had in the

previous sixty years of nationalist discourse. It is fair to say that “secularism” has become a kind of shorthand in referring to many aspects of society that touch upon religious belief and practice in civil society.

By contrast, the assertion that Hindu culture should be the defining feature of Indian national life is implicit in many of the writings in chapters 5, 6, and 7 of this volume, including those of V. D. Savarkar, the originator of the term “Hindutva,” and prominent members of the Indian National Congress, such as B. G. Tilak. The Hindu Mahasabha, founded in 1915, gave formal structure to Hindu opposition to the Muslim League, founded in 1906. Many of the Mahasabha’s leaders were also members of the Indian National Congress, with this dual membership being uneasily accepted by those in the Congress who, like Nehru, regarded themselves as secular and socialist.

The separation of religion, nationalism, and politics was thus a constant struggle even before the coming of independence, but it took on a new urgency after 1947, when the partition of British India led to the antagonism between India and Pakistan that has so markedly influenced the domestic and international politics of both countries. In India, the antagonism was not directed solely against the Muslim leaders who had founded Pakistan, but was generalized, as is shown in some of the selections below, to include the huge Muslim population that remained in India, numbering in 1947 about fifty million.

Questioning the role of Indian Muslims in the national life of India was closely linked with the assertion of the defining role of Hindu culture in Indian nationhood. Two political parties in particular, the Jana Sangh and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), played a major role in the politicizing of Hinduism. Both of them derived much of their ideology, as well as their leadership, from an older group, founded in 1925, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), although the leadership of the RSS always insisted that it was a cultural, not a political, organization.

In this section, a variety of conflicting views on secularism, communalism, and Hindu nationalism are given, beginning with a statement from Jawaharlal Nehru, a vigorous spokesman for the secular state. This is followed by the opinions of his equally vigorous opponents. Behind them all is the declaration that India is a “united, socialist, secular, democratic republic,” and to parse these words is the prolegomena to understanding contemporary Indian civil society.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU’S LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

For Nehru, the cardinal doctrine of the modern nation-state was the separation of the state from religion. The idea that religion should play a part in society was an idea, he believed, that had been given up in Europe centuries before, and had “no place in the mind of the modern man.”¹² And yet he knew that the culture of independent India was saturated and colored by religion. In his devotion to a secular India, how could he avoid that most defining of religious rituals: the death ceremony? How could

he avoid being identified with what he feared most, the fostering of communalism? Problematically, much that he held most dear in nature was saturated in religious symbolism. It was with this thought in mind that in 1954 he wrote this moving last will and testament, which was not published until after his death in 1964.

I wish to declare with all earnestness that I do not want any religious ceremonies performed for me after my death. I do not believe in any such ceremonies, and to submit to them, even as a matter of form, would be hypocrisy and an attempt to delude ourselves and others.

When I die, I should like my body to be cremated. . . . A small handful of my ashes should be thrown into the Ganga. . . . My desire to have my ashes thrown into the Ganga at Allahabad has no religious significance, so far as I am concerned. I have no religious sentiment in the matter. I have been attached to the Ganga and Jumna rivers in Allahabad ever since my childhood, and as I have grown older, this attachment has also grown. . . . The Ganga, especially, is the river of India, beloved of her people, around which are intertwined her racial memories, her hopes and fears, her songs of triumph, her victories and her defeats. She has been a symbol of India's age-long culture, ever-changing, ever-flowing, and yet ever the same Ganga. . . . And though I have discarded much of past tradition and custom, and am anxious that India should rid herself of all shackles that bind and restrain her and divide her people, and suppress vast numbers of them, and prevent the free development of the body and the spirit; though I seek all this, yet I do not wish to cut myself off from that past completely. I am proud of that great inheritance that has been, and is, ours, and I am conscious that I, too, like all of us, am a link in that unbroken chain which goes back to dawn of history in the immemorial past of India.

The major portion of my ashes should, however, be disposed of otherwise. I want them to be carried high up into the air in an aeroplane and scattered from that height over the fields where the peasants of India toil, so that they might mingle with the dust and soil of India and become an indistinguishable part of India.

[Dorothy Norman, ed., *Nehru: The First Sixty Years*
(New York: John Day, 1965), 2:574–575.]

S. P. MOOKERJEE: HINDUISM IS “SYNONYMOUS WITH INDIA’S WIDEST NATIONAL ASPIRATIONS”

Shyama Prasad Mookerjee (1901–1953) was a key figure in the political expression of Hindu nationalism. An urbane and cultured product of the Bengal of his time, at home in both Indian and Western literature, he was elected to the Bengal Legislative Council in 1929 and became vice chancellor of Calcutta University (1934–1938). Influenced by V. D. Savarkar, he joined the Hindu Mahasabha. Elected to the Constituent Assembly, he became a minister in Nehru's first Cabinet. Strongly disagreeing with

Nehru's handling of the Kashmir issue on the grounds that it was too favourable to Pakistan and Muslims, he resigned from the Nehru government in 1950. He organized a political party, the Jana Sangh, which for a time had quite a strong base in North India, winning 10 percent of the votes in the elections to Parliament (the Lok Sabha) in 1967. Mookerjee did not live to see this development. In 1953 he went to Kashmir to protest what he regarded as the appeasement of Pakistan over its occupation of part of Indian territory. He was arrested and died in prison. A reminder of continuity in Indian political life: Mookerjee's private secretary was Atal Bihari Vajpayee (b. 1924), a member of the RSS, who became prime minister of India as leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

The following brief selection from Mookerjee's writings indicates why he appealed to Hindu nationalist sentiments. The rejection of Gandhi's doctrine of non-violence is an important aspect of Hindu nationalism.

Who can dare question that Hinduism, if correctly understood, is the highest embodiment of toleration and catholicity and is synonymous with India's widest national aspirations? The Mahasabha wants that India should be completely free of foreign domination and be governed by a constitution which will give equal right of citizenship to one and all, based on universal adult suffrage. It is genuinely anxious that the religion and culture of all groups be duly protected and there should be no bar to the enjoyment of any right or privilege merely on the ground of caste, creed, sex or religion.

A spirit of non-violence that saps the power to resist evil or aggression is against the true teaching of Hindu religion and the Hindu Mahasabha believes that both the Bhagavad Gita and the Sword must remain side by side to maintain peace and progress according to India's best traditions. While it is proud that the sacred duty of maintaining the welfare and integrity of this great and holy land must primarily rest on 75 per cent of its population, comprising the Hindu race, it also genuinely expects that all others inhabiting India, though pursuing different religions, will identify themselves wholly and completely with India's destiny. . . . It aims however to install into the minds of Hindus, interpreted in the broadest sense possible, an undying faith in the sacredness and justice of their call and in the possibility of three hundred millions of Hindus remaining united for the purpose of wresting freedom for their beloved motherland.

[Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, *Awake Hindusthan*
(Calcutta: R. C. Banerjee, 1945), 174–175.]

THE RASHTRIYA SWAYAMSEVAK SANGH: DEFINING HINDU NATIONALISM

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, founded in 1925, was not of great importance until after Independence. The writings of V. D. Savarkar had a central place in the formation of its ideology, but what gave it strength was a tightly controlled cadre of

devoted and disciplined followers under able leaders; the leadership of two major political parties, the Jana Sangh and the BJP, came from the RSS. The publicists of the RSS emphasize that it is neither a religious nor a political group, but one that understands that a nation is a composite of territory, culture, language, history, and religious practices. They claim that India is unique in combining all of these in what they describe as Hindu nationalism.

When in 1949 the government forced the RSS to provide its constitution if it wanted to be recognized, it produced one accompanied by this short statement of its aims. These aims are bland enough—one could substitute the name of any religion for Hindu—but behind each phrase can be read, as many people in India do read, a sinister agenda for the domination of the nation by a faction that excludes those who reject its vision of a good Hindu society, built on Hindu values.

To eradicate the fissiparous tendencies arising from diversities of sect, faith, caste and creed and from political, economic, linguistic and provincial differences among Hindus; to make them realize the greatness of their past; to inculcate in them a spirit of service, sacrifice, and selfless devotion to the Hindu Samaj as a whole; to build up an organized and well-disciplined corporate life; and to bring about an all-round regeneration of the Hindu Samaj.

[Translation of Hindi original by D. R. Goyal, in *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh*, 2nd rev. ed. (New Delhi: Radha Krishna, 2000), 256.]

M. S. GOLWALKAR: THE CENTRAL CORE OF NATIONHOOD

M. S. Golwalkar (1906–1973) became the *sarsangchalak*, or supreme guide, of the RSS in 1940. The authority vested in the post recalls that of the guru of the classical Indian tradition, although the RSS does not use the term. Because of the association of Nathuram Godse, Gandhi's assassin, with the RSS, the organization was banned until 1949.

Golwalkar argued that while the nation was built on territory, racial unity, culture, and language, religion was of overriding importance. The three readings given here are rather stilted translations from Hindi (the translator is not identified), which should not conceal the emotional appeal their ideas can make to readers. The RSS claim that Golwalkar's books had "hundreds of thousands" of readers may be correct.

THE HINDU WAY OF LIFE

This first reading, in which Golwalkar argues that dharma, duty, and discipline—not meditation or devotion—are the foundation of a good society, is in the form of a dialogue.

Q. What does the word "Hindu" indicate, according to you?

A. The word "Hindu" denotes a society. . . .

Q. Is the word “Hindu” to be found in our Shastras [scriptures]?

A. Why not? The word is formed with the letter Hi from the Himalayas and Indu from the Indu Sarovar (the Southern Ocean), conveying the entire stretch of our motherland. . . .

Q. Why not the word “Bharatiya” instead of Hindu?

A. No doubt, Bharatiya too is our own name, associated with us since hoary times. But today there is a misconception regarding the word. It is commonly used as a translation of the word “India” which includes all the various communities like the Muslim, Christian, etc., residing in this land. So, the word Bharatiya is likely to mislead us when we want to denote our particular society. The word “Hindu” alone connotes correctly and completely the meaning that we want to convey. . . .

Q. You have always equated the “Indian Nation” with “Hindu Rashtra.” How far is it correct?

A. Let me try to be clear at the very outset, one misconception about “Hindu Rashtra.” The word “Hindu” is not merely “religious,” it denotes a people and their highest values of life. We, therefore, let our concept of nation emphasise a few basic things: unqualified devotion to the motherland and our cultural ideals, pride in our history which is very ancient, respect for our great forefathers, and lastly, a determination in every one of us to build up a common life of prosperity and security. All this comes under the one caption: Hindu Rashtra. We are not concerned with an individual’s mode of worship. . . .

Q. What is the proof that the Hindu way of life is founded on a firm basis?

A. There were countless attacks from various foreign groups such as Shakas, Hunas and Muslims. We stood like a rock and faced them, keeping the frame of our society intact. Then came the European people like the Portuguese, French, Dutch, and the British to annihilate us in a shrewd manner. Still we have continued to live as the same people. In addition to the galaxy of saints and emperors from the beginning of history, modern Bharat has produced giants like Vivekananda, Ramatirtha, and Mahatma Gandhi. Is this not a sufficient proof that our Hindu life is founded on a firm base?

[Interviews with M. S. Golwalkar in *Spotlights* (Bangalore: Sahitya Sindhu, 1974), 106–107, 113.]

DHARMA AWAKENS THE COMMON INNER BOND

“It will be seen,” according to M. A. Venkata Rao in the preface to Golwalkar’s best-known book, *Bunch of Thoughts*, “how full, how positive, how patriotic, how practical and idealistic at the same time, the principles and methods of nation building adopted by the Sangh are.”

According to our philosophy, the very projection of the Universe is due to a disturbance in the equilibrium of the three attributes—*sattva*, *rajas* and

*tamas*¹³—and if there is . . . a perfect balance of the three attributes, then the Universe will dissolve back to the Unmanifest State. Thus, disparity is an indivisible part of nature and we have to live with it. Our efforts should be only to keep it in limits and take away the sting born out of disparity. So any arrangement that tries to remove the inherent disparities altogether on the basis of superficial equality is bound to fail. Democracy, even in the advanced state in the Western countries, is after all the rule by a few who are well versed in the art of politics and capable of winning the masses to their line. The concept of Democracy . . . is, to a very large extent, only a myth in practice.

Communism, too, has completely failed to realise any of its declared concepts of equality. . . . It has envisaged that after the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat . . . the state would [wither] away. . . . According to Communism, this is the highest state of equality that a nation can conceive of. But Communism, based as it is on materialism, cannot explain how that ideal state can come to life. . . .

Our philosophy, on the other hand, has pictured the highest state of society and offered for it a cogent explanation. It is described as . . . *There existed no state, no king, no penalty and criminal. All protected one another by virtue of dharma. Dharma* is the universal code of right conduct that awakens the Common Inner Bond, restrains selfishness and keeps the people together in that harmonious state even without external authority. There will be no selfishness, no hoarding and all men will live and work for the whole. . . . Both individual and society supplement and complement each other with the result that both get strengthened and benefited.

[M. S. Golwalkar, *Bunch of Thoughts: Our World Mission* (Bangalore: Vikrama Prakashan, 1966), v, xxxiv, 18–20.]

THE DANGERS OF MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS, AND COMMUNISTS

In this next selection, Gowalkar writes of what he believes to be the sacred trust of the Hindu people, and of its enemies.

It is clear, therefore, that the mission of reorganising the Hindu people on the lines of their unique national genius which the Sangh has taken up is not only a great process of true national regeneration of Bharat but also the inevitable precondition to realise the dream of world unity and human welfare. For, as we have seen, it is the grand world-unifying thought of Hindus alone that can supply the abiding basis for human brotherhood, that knowledge of the Inner Spirit which will charge the human mind with the sublime urge to toil for the happiness of mankind, while opening out full and free scope for every small life-specialty on the face of the earth to grow to its full stature. . . .

Thus we find that even though some people may call us communal and all that, still their beliefs and our beliefs are the same. Only, we have the courage

to say the truth, whereas they try to appease and propitiate out of fear, of course, under the garb of "broad-mindedness," "secularism" and so on. That is all. No other difference. The conclusion that we arrive at is that all those communities which are staying in this land and yet are not true to their salt, have not imbibed its culture, do not lead the life which this land has been unfolding for so many centuries, do not believe in its philosophy, in its national heroes and in all that this land has been standing for, and are, to put it briefly, foreign to our national life. And the only real, abiding and glorious national life in this holy land of Bharat has been of the Hindu People. . . .

The Case of the Muslims. Have those [Muslims] who remained here [in India after Partition] changed . . . ? Has their old hostility and murderous mood, which resulted in widespread riots, looting, arson, raping . . . come to a halt now? It would be suicidal to delude ourselves into believing that they have turned patriots overnight after the creation of Pakistan. On the contrary, the Muslim menace has increased a hundredfold by the creation of Pakistan which has become a springboard for all their future aggressive designs on our country. . . . We of the Sangh have been, in fact hammering this historic truth for the last many years. . . . Everywhere the Muslims are being abetted in their separatist and subversive activities by our own Government, our leaders and political parties. . . .

The Case of the Christians. So far as the Christians are concerned, to a superficial observer they appear not only quite harmless but as the very embodiment of compassion and love for humanity! Their speeches abound in words like "service" and "human salvation" as though they are specially deputed by the Almighty to uplift humanity! They run schools and colleges, hospitals and orphanages. The people of our country, simple and innocent as they are, are taken in by all these things. But what is the real and ulterior motive of Christians in pouring crores of rupees in all these activities? . . . Towards that end they feel that any tactics, however foul, is fair. The various surreptitious and mean tactics they employ for conversion are all too well known. There is the case of a village where, in the last census, the Christian missionaries got the whole population entered as Christians. When the mischief was known and the people there protested, the Christian missionaries told them, "Nothing can be done now. You have been registered as Christians in Government records. So you have to behave hereafter only as Christians." The poor Hindu villagers, cut off from the support and succour of the indifferent Hindu Society, believed in their words and embraced Christianity. It is through such tactics that they are swelling their numbers day in and day out. . . . The creation in Assam of a Nagaland is glaring example of this. That the open rebellion going on in the Naga Hills is all engineered by the Christian missionaries was accepted even by Pandit Nehru. . . . So long as the Christians here indulge in such activities and consider themselves as agents of the international movement for the spread of Christianity, and refuse

to offer their first loyalty to the land of their birth and behave as true children of the heritage and culture of their ancestors, they will remain here as hostiles and will have to be treated as such.

Communism. A serious failure of democracy in our country is the growing menace of Communism which is a sworn enemy of democratic procedure. In a bid not to be left behind the Communists in their economic appeal to the masses, our leaders are only making Communism more respectable by themselves taking up the Communist jargon and the Communist programmes. If the leaders imagine that they will be able to take away the wind out of the Communist sail by such tactics, they are sadly mistaken. . . .

Various are the attempts going on to neutralise the appeal of Communism in our country. Some people feel that the Bhoodan movement launched by Vinobaji will take away the appeal of Communism. On the contrary, with its Communistic slogan of “land to the tiller” and with threats by some of his shortsighted followers like, “If you do not give of your own accord, Communists are bound to come up and take away your all by force,” it will only give rise to an impression in the mass mind that after all Communism is correct and is inevitable.

[Golwalkar, *Bunch of Thoughts*, 7, 162, 167–168, 173, 179–180, 182, 186–188, 190.]

BALRAJ MADHOK: THE INDIANIZATION OF ALL ASPECTS OF NATIONAL LIFE

On S. P. Mookerjee's death in 1953, leadership of the Jana Sangh passed to Balraj Madhok (b. 1920), a prolific author under whom the party won representation in Parliament. Many aspects of the manifesto he wrote for the Jana Sangh became part of the general current of Hindu nationalism. Hindu nationalism carries with it a strong criticism of “foreign” religions, specifically Islam and Christianity, as antipathetic to what he called “Indianisation.” Madhok was expelled from the Jana Sangh for “indiscipline,” including his criticism of the control exercised over the party by the RSS. In 1980 the Jana Sangh transformed itself into the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which became the leading member of an alliance that formed the government of India from 1998 to 2004.

Thinkers like S. P. Mookerjee and Balraj Madhok make little mention of religion in terms of belief, but they identify Indian nationalism as rooted in the greatness of India in pre-Islamic times. Implicit in this understanding of Indian nationalism is the need to purify India of foreign cultural elements, especially Islam and Christianity.

The call for Indianisation both as a concept and as a programme of action has evoked mixed reaction in the country. While most nationalist and patriotic Indians who have been worried by the growing strength of fissiparous and disrupt-

tive forces and tendencies in the country have welcomed it as the need of the time, the Communists, their fellow travellers and communalists with extra-territorial loyalties, who are mentally afraid of Indian nationalism, are upset by the popular response to this call. . . .

[After the reorganization of state boundaries on linguistic lines] the sense of glory of India began to be subordinated to the glory and greatness of the respective linguistic States which began to take the place of Bharat Mata [Mother India] in the hearts and minds of the people. . . . The net result of this is that most Indians today are Punjabis or Bengalis or Malayalis first and Indians only next or never. . . . That is one compelling reason for taking to Indianisation of our people in right earnestness before it becomes too late. . . . It is a painful fact that casteism has become more pronounced rather than getting weakened during the twenty-two years of freedom. There are many reasons for it. The most important of them is the exploitation of caste for political purposes by the political leadership and parties. . . . The reservations [of government jobs and seats in legislatures] given to Scheduled Castes [Untouchables] and Scheduled Tribes in the Constitution have created vested interests in the perpetuation of caste system. Before such reservations came, there was going on an imperceptible process of change of castes. The people belonging to lower castes tried to upgrade their social status with the improvement of their economic and educational condition. . . .

Lack of a strong sense of nationalism is not only reflected in the growing strength of the divisive forces of linguism [demanding political safeguards for various languages], regionalism, casteism and communalism but it has also resulted in intensification of mental slavery which came with foreign rule. This is particularly true of the intellectual elite and the upper classes of the society which dominate and control the apparatus of power in the name of the people. In the name of modernism, progressivism, socialism, and secularism everything Indian has come under a cloud. . . .

But the mental slavery of Indian leadership which looks upon everything with American or Russian eyes has stood in the way of reorientation of our economic thinking and policies. Indianisation in the economic field therefore also is a need of the hour. . . .

There are a number of reasons for the wayward behaviour and extra-territorial loyalties of this section of Muslims. [The] stress of Islam on renouncing and rejecting non-Muslim ancestors and heritage after a man is converted to Islam and its antipathy to the concept of territorial nationalism in which respect for past heroes and heritage plays a significant part is one reason for it. . . . Instead of creating respect for the Indian inheritance and bringing Muslims into the national mainstream, systematic efforts are being made at Aligarh [Muslim University] and elsewhere to completely insulate the Muslim mind from Indian life and thought, cultural tradition and other influences that could remove the

canker of two-nation theory from their minds. . . . Their Indianisation [is] a vital necessity for the peace, security and integrity of India.

[Balraj Madhok, *Indianisation (What, Why, and How)*

(Delhi: S. Chand and Co., 1970), 19, 25, 27, 30–31, 42, 45, 50–51, 53, 55.]

BIPAN CHANDRA: WHAT IS COMMUNALISM?

According to its proponents, secularism is the necessary antidote to Hindu nationalism and Muslim separatism, which both lead to communalism, a force destructive to democracy and the unity of India. Bipan Chandra (b. 1928), a noted economic and political historian, gives a succinct definition of communalism that suggests why he finds it a threat. He writes from a Marxist stance, but his general viewpoint is shared by many Indian scholars.

Simply put, communalism is the belief that because a group of people follow a particular religion they have, as a result, common social, political and economic interests. It is the belief that in India Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Sikhs form different and distinct communities which are independently and separately structured or consolidated; that all the followers of a religion share not only a community of religious interests but also common secular interests, that is, common economic, political, social and cultural interests; that Indians inevitably perceive such interests through the spectacles of the religious grouping and are bound to possess a sense of identity based on religion, i.e., religion has to become the basis of their basic social identity and the determinant of their basic social relationships; that they possess the inherent tendency to act and function as a separate group or entity or unit in these fields; that they constitute separate “organic wholes” or homogeneous and cohesive communities, especially in the political field; that each such religious “community” has its own separate history; that communal identity and division have always pervaded Indian society, though they may have been reinforced in modern times; that the religious “community” has become the basis of the organization of modern politics in India and of the perception of economic, political and cultural issues by the Indian people; that a “real” Hindu or Muslim can belong only to a party of the community and cannot differ politically from other Hindus or Muslims; that all Hindus or Muslims must think alike in politics because they are Hindus or Muslims; that, in fact, each religious “community” constitutes a homogeneous entity and even a distinct “society” in itself; that there is and can be no such thing as an Indian nation—India has been, is, and has to be, a mere “confederation of religious communities.” . . .

Herein lies the analytical value of seeing communalism as false consciousness. On the one hand, one can see the objective falsity of communalism and therefore not accept its surface view; on the other hand, one can see that false

consciousness does not grow unless it reflects, though perversely, some aspects of social reality and serves a social function for some social groups, classes and interests.

[Bipan Chandra, *Communalism in Modern India*
(New Delhi: Vikas, 1986), 1–2, 30.]

*MUSHIRUL HASAN: SECULARISM, COMMUNALISM,
AND THE RELIGIOUS SYMBOL OF THE BABRI MASJID*

One of the most disturbing incidents in contemporary India was the destruction in December 1992 by a Hindu group of a sixteenth-century Islamic mosque supposedly built by Babur, the first Mughal ruler, on the site of a Hindu temple that had allegedly marked the spot where Rama had been born (the “Ram- janma-bhumi”). This led to violent outbursts in which hundreds of people, mainly Muslims, were killed. For many people, both Indians and foreigners, this seemed a dramatic—and successful—attack on the secular state.

Professor Mushirul Hasan (b. 1949), a historian and vice-chancellor of a liberal Islamic university, joined with fellow social scientists in analyzing the meaning of the violence in the context of the secular state.

The controversy over the Babri Masjid–Ramjanmabhumi issue has not just aroused deep religious passions but has raised the fundamental issue of how best to allow competing religious symbols to co-exist in a society committed to the secular ideal. Admittedly, the pressing need is to resolve conflicting claims over the mosque at Ayodhya. But, in the long run, all concerned citizens will need to marshal their intellectual resources so as to evolve a mechanism and, at the same time, define social codes for resolving controversies of this nature. Otherwise, the initiative, as always, will rest with those who manipulate both political institutions and processes to create and widen arenas of conflict.

It is not surprising that the flare-up, centred around the mosque in Ayodhya, should cause such deep concern. After all, no other issue since India’s Independence has generated such violent passions, led to such widespread riots, gripped the people with panic, fear and anger, and threatened to destroy the democratic, secular consensus envisaged by the architects of the Indian Constitution. Sentiments have been polarized to such an extent that two successive governments have fallen in the course of just a year, with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) succeeding in placing the mandir (temple) issue on the national agenda. As the *Times of India* commented on 17 October 1989, “Jettisoning once and for all its mumbo-jumbo about Gandhian values, the BJP, under Mr. L. K. Advani’s spirited leadership, has gone on the offensive with a strategy clearly designed to polarise life in the country along antagonistic religious lines.”

This is not all. For the first time, religious zealots, bolstered by politically articulate groups, found both a cause and an opportunity to create a bond of fraternal unity among their divided and stratified constituency. In the Shilanyas ceremonies [the sanctifying of bricks to rebuild the temple], the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), backed by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), found a unifying symbol and a cementing bond which had, for centuries, eluded Hindu reformers and preachers. Through flamboyant demonstrations of religious worship and through mindless retaliatory acts, these groups have clearly succeeded in stoking the fires of communal unrest. . . .

The *real* issue is not the future of the Babri mosque or of Rama's birthplace; in fact the seemingly endless debate among scholars over the existence of a temple on the present site of the mosque or the actual birthplace of Rama is of academic interest. The main concern of the people of Faizabad [near Babri Masjid] and their brethren in other parts of the country must be to create an ethos and a social order in which competing symbols can be blended into a harmonious whole. Individuals and groups have quite successfully done so in the past and there is no reason why it cannot be done in our times. In the ultimate analysis, India's hope lies in areas like Faizabad where shared memories and common historical experiences should slowly but steadily strengthen bonds of unity and promote consensus and accommodation between different segments of society. Even though strewn with obstacles and difficulties, it is worth fighting for the realization of such an ideal.

[Mushirul Hasan, "Competing Symbols and Shared Codes: Inter-Community Relations in Modern India," in *Anatomy of a Confrontation: The Babri Masjid–Ramjanmabhumi Issue*, ed. S. Gopal (New Delhi: Viking, 1991), 99–114, 115–116.]

THE BJP PERSPECTIVE: THE BABRI MASJID WAS A SYMBOL OF CONQUEST, NOT RELIGION

The academic denunciation of the destruction of Babri Masjid, called in the document quoted here "a campaign of calumny," was answered officially in 1993 by the BJP in a "White Paper." The "Ayodhya movement" refers to the campaign to replace the mosque with a temple to Rama at his supposed birthplace.

[The Babri Masjid] was purely and simply a symbol not of devotion and of religion but of conquest. . . . It was for the country the symbol of its subjugation. . . . The Ayodhya movement is a watershed in Indian history. . . . The BJP has always affirmed that the Ayodhya movement was not just a plea for a temple for Sri Rama, that instead it reflected a far deeper quest for recapturing our national identity. The movement is firmly rooted in the inclusive and assimilative cultural heritage of India. It represents the soul of the nationalist thrust of our freedom movement. The post-independence political creed of the Congress

and of most other political parties has come to regard every thing that inspired this nation in the past as less than secular—in fact as communal, and even anti-national. The Ayodhya movement symbolized the re-establishment of those roots of our nationhood which had dried up due to post-independence politics and a spiritually bankrupt idiom. Indeed, “secularism” became a perverted slogan—merely a means to catch votes and to shout down every nationalist. . . .

The ruling Congress with its overt and covert allies in the opposition relentlessly charge the BJP with politicising the issue of the temple at Ayodhya. This charge no doubt suits the pseudo-secular political parties in their competitive pursuit of Muslim votes, but it clearly lacks substance and a sense of history without which no polity, and certainly not the polity of a nation with a known history extending back 5,000 years, can function at peace with itself.

[Bharatiya Janata Party, *White Paper on Ayodhya and the Rama Temple Movement* (New Delhi: Bharatiya Janata Party, 1993), 7.]

SUMIT SARKAR: SECULARISM, NATIONALISM, AND THE RIGHT TO CONVERSION

Sumit Sarkar (b. 1939), until retirement a social historian at the University of Delhi, has noted that the history of modern India is dominated by the advance of the Hindu right and globalized forms of capitalism. It is from this perspective that he strongly criticized those who attack people's right to convert from one religion to another.

A bill has been circulated to punish conversion through (a very vaguely-defined) “allurement” by a minimum of three years in jail. What is worrying is the way terms of discourse and commonsensical every day assumptions are getting moulded, as had happened during the Ayodhya agitation. . . . Conversion is always assumed to be Christian (or, in different contexts, Islamic or any other non-Hindu) conversion. The systematic work of the VHP [Vishva Hindu Parishad] ever since its foundation in 1964 to spread high-Hindu practices and norms among adivasis [tribal people] is never acknowledged as conversion, but described by terms like shuddhi (purification), “reconversion,” or parivartan (turning back). . . . The implicit assumption behind the use or acceptance of such terms is that being a Hindu is somehow the “natural” condition of any Indian. Discursively, therefore, we are already perilously close to Hindu Rashtra. And “Hindu,” as defined by the Sangh Parivar, is obviously worlds removed from the devotion of a Ramakrishna for whom the difference between Ishwar, Allah and God mattered as little as that between jal, pani and water [all words for water]. . . . The surprisingly apologetic tone about conversions, even among many critics of the anti-Christian campaign, makes necessary the restatement of some things which should be obvious. Conversion in the sense of voluntary

change of religion is not just a logical corollary of the Article 25 clause about the fundamental right to “preach, practise and propagate” religion (why else should anyone seek to “propagate”?). Freedom of conscience surely includes the right to change one’s views about religion, and a curbing of that right can lead to restrictions on freedom of choice in general, with dominant groups dictating what one can think or do in politics, artistic tastes, dress, ways of life. Conversely, conversion by force or fraud is equally reprehensible, and one fails to see the need for any “national debate” about it. Given the current political and administrative situation in [India . . .] it should be obvious that groups like the VHP are far more likely to indulge in such methods. There is ample evidence, notably from Gujarat, that forcible or fraudulent Hindu conversions are in fact going on on a significant scale in adivasi (tribal) areas. . . .

The total implausibility of forcible Christian conversion in today’s India makes necessary a constant harping on Inquisition atrocities centuries ago. . . . Two inter-related questions arise here. Why target Christians, then, and how is the campaign attaining some plausibility? Christians, as a small and electorally insignificant minority in most parts of the country, are in the first place a conveniently safe target under conditions of coalition government. Adverse foreign reactions have so far been kept within limits by the new strategy of, not big riots, but everyday petty humiliation of Christians in many parts of the country, interspersed with occasional gross acts of violence against individuals. Attacking them helps to keep the wilder elements within the Sangh Parivar both satisfied and in good fighting trim for future, more aggressive phases. Perhaps more important, Christians represent a convenient and not entirely implausible surrogate for “swadeshi” at a time when BJP-led Union governments have speeded up the opening-up of the country to multinationals. . . .

The extent of missionary complicity with colonialism in India has also been much exaggerated and simplified. Early Company rulers like Hastings and Cornwallis, far from encouraging missionaries, often developed close collaborative relations with orthodox Brahman literati, and the Baptist mission had to set up its first outpost in Serampur, then outside British Bengal. Later, too, there have been many missionary critics of colonial policies. Above all, at the other end of the social scale, recent historical research is increasingly highlighting the extent to which sustained Christian philanthropic and educational work have had an empowering impact on significant sections of adivasis (tribal people), dalits and poor and subordinated groups in general. Such small gains in the direction of greater social justice may have been earlier the largely unintended fall-out of Christian proselytisation efforts, often among the very many who did not convert, but still found missions a helpful resource for their own upliftment. Today, with the churches clearly changing in quite striking ways, there is ample evidence of far greater awareness of such issues among many—though of course very far from all—Christian activists in India. And perhaps it is precisely these aspects that arouse the greatest anger and fear among adherents of Hindutva.

Certainly Arun Shourie's widely-circulated anti-Christian tirade, *Missionaries in India* (1994), is very clear on this point. It begins, and ends, with a violent denunciation of the ways in which the Church today "spurred by the new 'liberation theology,' is spurring movements among so-called "dalits"—movements which he fears "would certainly disrupt Hindu society."

["Conversions and the Sangh Parivar: A Conversation with Sumit Sarkar,"
The Hindu (Chennai, India), Nov. 9, 1999.]

ARUN SHOURIE: MISSIONARIES IN INDIA

Arun Shourie (b. 1941), a high-ranking official in BJP administrations, has been influential both in India and in the West for his harsh criticism of Muslim and Christian activity in India. This selection is from the work referred to by Sumit Sarkar above. "Missionaries" needs careful definition. As used by Shourie it is meant to imply "foreigners," but in fact few foreign Christian missionaries (in the old sense) are permitted to work in India. Most of the educational and medical work Shourie decries is now carried on by Indian Christians, although many nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) supply financial aid to Indian-run Christian institutions.

As Gandhiji used to say, the work of missionaries quickened the efforts of Hindu reformers to set our own house in order. The missionaries' zeal to convert Hindus and the realization that they were specially targeting the sections which had been trodden down, lent an urgency to the determination of reformers to work for the uplift and integration of these sections into the rest of Hindu society. Even the denunciations of Hinduism and India by the missionaries served a purpose. . . . The reformers were hastened in their work; the people were made more quickly aware of the defects in our society than they might otherwise have been. . . .

Where they introduced us to a smattering of western learning, they led us to completely forget and—with no knowledge of it at all—feel ashamed of our tradition. Where they introduced modern schools, they, along with the secular British rulers, completely erased the vast network of instruction which, as Gandhiji used to remind his readers . . . was in place all across the country. Where they established modern hospitals, the system and outlook of which they were a part made us completely oblivious of the vast medical knowledge that had been accumulated over the centuries here: a knowledge the richness of which we are being reminded today as the West rushes to patent those very herbs and cures!

[Arun Shourie, *Missionaries in India: Continuities, Changes, Dilemmas*
(New Delhi: ASA Publication, 1994), 4–7.]

CASSETTE CULTURE AND THE PROVOCATION OF RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE

Ethnomusicologist Peter Manuel, doing field research in North India in 1989–1991 during the run-up to the destruction of the Babri Masjid, discovered that audio cassettes were being utilized to circulate inflammatory speeches and songs against Muslims and to promote a Hindutva-style ideology. In such productions, Muslims are portrayed as foreign marauders who deserve to have the mosque—and, indeed, any accommodative rights in India—taken away from them. Manuel found that such speeches and songs, whether live at rallies or played on cassettes, could easily lead to discord and even riots. Manuel concludes, “I have discussed these tapes and reproduced some of their vitriolic demagoguery at length here in order to illustrate the kind of poison that a ‘people’s medium’ is capable of disseminating. . . . Democratic, grassroots control of the mass media is hardly a guarantee of progressive, humanistic expression” (225).

In one cassette from 1990, then–BJP Member of Parliament Uma Bharti (b. 1959) made the following exhortation.

Chandra Shekar says we should build the temple, but change the location. I ask him would you change your father? . . . We’ve wasted 44 years while these elitists court the Muslim vote bank. We need people like [Sardar] Patel and Subhash [Chandra Bose], who are willing to sacrifice their lives for the motherland, who can wipe away her tears and gun down the traitors. . . . You Muslims link yourselves to [Mughal emperor] Aurangzeb, not to India. We sang songs of Hindu–Muslim amity, we were ready for brotherhood, but it didn’t happen. Your Quran preaches holy war, while our tradition calls for peace and accommodation even if we’re being ground underfoot. . . . So we have tried to have peace, but now we want our temple. . . . You’ll see on October 30th. When ten Bajrang Dal members sit on the chest of an Ali, then we’ll see whether the place will be called Ram Janmabhoomi or Babri. . . . We’ll see if this country will be Hindu or Muslim. . . . Hindus, wake up—they’ve looted you and you stayed silent; they sacked your temples and raped your mothers and daughters, and you kept quiet. What reward did you get for your equanimity?

[Peter Manuel, *Cassette Culture: Popular Music and Technology in North India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 253.]

PARTHA CHATTERJEE: SECULARISM AND TOLERANCE

Partha Chatterjee (b. 1947) is a public intellectual with a distinguished career spanning India and the United States. He has degrees in political science from Presidency College, Calcutta, and the University of Rochester, New York; he is a former director of the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta; and he teaches in the Department

of Anthropology at Columbia University. A founding member of the Subaltern Studies Collective, Chatterjee has made impressive contributions to the study of Indian history, nationalism, the situation of women, and other contemporary issues. He has also published poems in Bengali and is a well-known playwright and actor on the Calcutta stage. In this section he addresses one of the most controversial topics in contemporary Indian civil society, the role of the Hindu right and the question of religious tolerance.

[There is] a feature that has been noticed many times in the career of the modern state in many countries of the world: namely, that state policies of religious intolerance or of discrimination against religious and other ethnic minorities do not necessarily require the collapsing of state and religion, nor do they presuppose the existence of theocratic institutions.

The point is relevant in the context of the current politics of the Hindu right in India. It is necessary to ask why the political leadership of that movement chooses so meticulously to describe its adversaries as “pseudo-secularists,” conceding thereby its approval of the ideal as such of the secular state. None of the serious political statements made by that leadership contains any advocacy of theocratic institutions and, notwithstanding the exuberance of a few sadhus celebrating their sudden rise to political prominence, it is unlikely that a conception of the “Hindu Rashtra” will be seriously propagated which will include, for instance, a principle that the laws of the state be in conformity with this or that *samhita* or even with the general spirit of the *Dharmasastra*. In this sense, the leading element in the current movement of the Hindu right can be said to have undergone a considerable shift in position from, let us say, that of the Hindu Mahasabha at the time of the debate over the Hindu Code Bill some 40 years ago. Its position is also quite unlike that of most contemporary Islamic fundamentalist movements which explicitly reject the theoretical separation of state and religion as “western” and un-Islamic. It is similarly unlike the fundamentalist strand within the Sikh movements in recent years. The majoritarianism of the Hindu right, it seems to me, is perfectly at peace with the institutions and procedures of the “western” or “modern” state.

Indeed the mature, and most formidable, statement of the new political conception of “Hindutva” is unlikely to pit itself at all against the idea of the secular state. The persuasive power, and even the emotional charge, that the Hindutva campaign appears to have gained in recent years does not depend on its demanding legislative enforcement of ritual or scriptural injunctions, a role for religious institutions in legislative or judicial processes, compulsory religious instruction, state support for religious bodies, censorship of science, literature and art in order to safeguard religious dogma, or any other similar demand undermining the secular character of the existing Indian state. This is not to say that in the frenzied *mêlée* produced by the Hindutva brigade such noises would not be made; the point is that anti-secular demands of this type are not crucial to the political thrust, or even the public appeal, of the campaign.

Indeed, in its most sophisticated forms, the campaign of the Hindu right often seeks to mobilise on its behalf the will of an interventionist modernizing state in order to erase the presence of religious or ethnic particularism from the domains of law or public life and to supply, in the name of “national culture,” a homogenised content to the notion of citizenship. In this role, the Hindu right in fact seeks to project itself as a principled modernist critic of Islamic or Sikh fundamentalism, and to accuse the “pseudo-secularists” of preaching tolerance for religious obscurantism and bigotry. . . .

Thus, the comparison with fascism in Europe points to the very real possibility of a Hindu right locating itself quite firmly within the domain of the modernizing state, and using all of the ideological resources of that state to lead the charge against people who do not conform to its version of the “national culture.” From this position, the Hindu right can not only deflect accusations of being anti-secular, but can even use the arguments for interventionist secularization to promote intolerance and violence against minorities. . . .

What are the characteristics of the secular state? Three principles are usually mentioned in the liberal-democratic doctrine on this subject. The first is the principle of liberty which requires that the state permit the practice of any religion, within the limits set by certain other basic rights which the state is also required to protect. The second is the principle of equality which requires that the state not give preference to one religion over another. The third is the principle of neutrality which is best described as the requirement that the state not give preference to the religious over the non-religious and which leads, in combination with the liberty and equality principles, to what is known in US constitutional law as the “wall of separation” doctrine, viz. that the state not involve itself with religious affairs or organizations. . . .

No matter where this limit is drawn, it is surely required by the idea of the secular state that the liberty principle be limited only by the need to protect some other universal basic right and not by appeal to a particular interpretation of religious doctrine. This . . . has not been possible in India. The urge to undertake by legislation the reform of Hindu personal law and of Hindu religious institutions made it difficult for the state not to transgress into the area of religious reform itself. . . . It can easily be seen that this could lead to the entanglement of the state in a series of disputes that are mainly religious in character. . . .

The problem with the equality principle . . . is the way in which it has been affected by the project of reforming Hindu religion by state legislation. . . . What was the ground for intervening only in the affairs of one religious community and not of others? . . . [This] anomaly has, in the past few years, provided some of the most potent ammunition to the Hindu right in its campaign against what it describes as the “appeasement” of minorities. . . .

[Regarding the third principle,] the conclusion is inescapable that the “wall of separation” doctrine of US constitutional law can hardly be applied to the

present Indian situation. . . . This is precisely the ground on which the argument is sometimes made that "Indian secularism" has to have a different meaning from "western secularism." . . .

Where we end up then is a quandary. The desire for a secular state must concede defeat even as it claims to have discovered new meanings of secularism. . . . [T]his is one more instance where the supposedly universal forms of the modern state turn out to be inadequate for the postcolonial world. . . . To reconfigure the problem posed by the career of the secular state in India, we will need to locate it on a somewhat different conceptual ground. . . . My problem is to find a defensible ground for a strategic politics, both within and outside the field defined by the institution of the state, in which a minority group, or one who is prepared to think from the position of a minority group, can engage in India today. . . .

My approach would not call for any axiomatic approval to a uniform civil code for all citizens. Rather, it would start from the historically given reality of separate religion-based personal laws and the intricate involvement of state agencies in the affairs of religious institutions. . . .

What this will mean in institutional terms are processes through which each religious group will publicly seek and obtain from its members consent for its practices insofar as those practices have regulative power over the members. It is not necessary that there be a single uniform pattern of seeking consent that each group will be required to follow. But it is necessary, if toleration is to be demanded, that the processes satisfy the same condition of representativeness that is invoked when a legislative body elected under universal franchise is found unsuitable to act on matters concerning the religion of minority groups. In other words, even if a religious group declares that the validity of its practices can only be discussed and judged in its own forums, those institutions must have the same degree of publicity and representativeness that is demanded of all public institutions having regulatory functions. . . .

Opposition to this proposal is likely to come from those who will see in the separate representative public institutions of the religious communities a threat to the sovereign powers of the state. If such institutions are to be given any role in the regulation of the lives and activities of its members, then their very stature as elected bodies representative of their constituents will be construed as diminishing the sovereignty of the state. I can hear the murmurs already: "Remember how the SGPC [Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee] was used to provide legitimacy to Sikh separatism? Imagine what will happen if Muslims get their own parliament!" The deadweight of juridical sovereignty cannot be easily pushed aside even by those who otherwise subscribe to ideas of autonomy and self-regulating civil social institutions.

I do not, therefore, make these proposals for a reconfiguration of the problem of secularism in India and a redefinition of the concept of toleration with any degree of optimism. All I can hope for is that faced with a potentially

disastrous political impasse, some at least will prefer to err on the side of democracy.

[Partha Chatterjee, "Secularism and Tolerance,"
Economic and Political Weekly 28 (July 1994): 1768–1777.]

AIJAZ AHMAD: THE RISE AND POWER OF THE HINDU RIGHT

Aijaz Ahmad is one of India's leading public intellectuals. Marxist in his general orientation, he was born in Uttar Pradesh just before Independence, was raised in Pakistan, and later moved to the United States, where for several years he was a professor of literature. In recent years he has moved to India and become a leading commentator on political and cultural developments in South Asia, which he has astutely placed in their broader contexts. He often writes for *Frontline* and has been a fellow at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, as well as at the Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University.

In the following selection, written in 2002 after the communal violence in Godhra, Gujarat, he analyzes the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party and its allied organizations and their relation to structures of caste, class, economy, and culture. In 2002 the BJP was still in power at the Centre, and the Congress seemed to be fading into oblivion.

The destruction of Mir Bai's antique little mosque in Ayodhya in 1992 and the widespread pogrom in Gujarat in 2002, separated by a decade but also linked in a bath of innocents' blood, mark major watersheds in the history of Indian communalism, and in Indian history more generally. The mass vandalism that brought down the tiny mosque, generally known as Babri Masjid, was staged as a fascist spectacle orchestrated by the core leadership of the RSS and the BJP, and executed by the stormtroopers of the VHP, the Bajrang Dal, Shiv Sena and sundry other outfits of militant Hindutva. Billed as a symbolic act to redeem Hindu pride, the Ayodhya vandalism nevertheless led to immediate communal carnage, notably in Bombay, carried out by the same forces. The statewide pogroms of 2002 in Gujarat were billed as an act of retaliation on part of the Hindu masses for the death of *kar sevaks* [volunteers] who were returning from Ayodhya, in a mysterious fire that broke out at Godhra. In reality, this pogrom too was orchestrated by the armed wing of the RSS, notably the VHP, and directly supervised by the BJP's own state government, led by Narendra Modi, himself a former RSS *pracharak* [activist], while mass killings were supplemented with destruction of numerous mosques, *dargahs* and other symbols of religion and culture of Gujarati Muslims. Methodical killings are staged in the name of a war over Indian culture.

A common factor in the two events is of course that they occurred in both instances while BJP was in charge of state government, in UP and Gujarat respectively. Similarly, BJP gained electorally in both instances, adding two per

cent to its share of votes during the first state elections in UP after Ayodhya and adding substantially to its majority in Gujarat in the aftermath of the pogroms; indeed, the Ayodhya mobilisations contributed directly to the eventual emergence of BJP as the ruling party at the Centre, while its consolidation of power at the Centre greatly contributed to Modi's ability to carry out the more recent pogroms. A sea-change in Indian politics is indicated by the fact that while the Ayodhya vandalism was condemned by all political forces outside the Hindutva fraternity, BJP was sheltered by a wide array of regional parties during the Ayodhya massacres, so that not even a meaningful debate could be held in Parliament, indicating how much the political Centre in India has shifted to the Right. The Indian State filed criminal charges against key leaders of the BJP after Ayodhya, who continue to face prosecution, at least in principle, while no such charges have been brought against Modi and his cabinet colleagues in state government against whom ample evidence exists. Kalyan Singh, who was the BJP chief minister in UP at the time when the masjid came down, eventually left the BJP in a faction fight and is now living in political wilderness; Modi, the Gujarat chief minister who masterminded the pogroms, was, by contrast, immediately exonerated at BJP's national convention at Goa and has now emerged, after the sweeping electoral victory, as an important leader of the party and a possible prime ministerial candidate after the current generation of BJP leaders, Vajpayee and Advani, have taken their turns. . . .

The BJP . . . has been in power, at the head of a broad and broadening coalition, since 1998. This innings too began with widespread violence, this time against Christians, most notably in Gujarat but also in other states and as far afield as Orissa, and the wave subsided only when the burning of an Australian missionary fleetingly focussed international attention on this violence. Three aspects of that wave were notable. First, systematic violence against Christians put them in the same category as Muslims, as believers in a "foreign" religion and therefore worthy of extermination. Second, elements from among the dalits and adivasis were used systematically, specially in Gujarat, in something of a rehearsal for the more recent pogrom of Muslims. Third, the open participation of VHP and Bajrang Dal—the latter being certified by Home Minister Advani immediately as "patriots"—shrewdly tested the will of the allies and, predictably, the allies did not confront either the BJP or its parent organisation, the RSS. . . .

It is important to recapitulate this history briefly so as to offer a grim correction to the belief held broadly among the secular forces, which include the present writer, that communalism in India is a sectional pathology specific to an extremist fringe while the bulk of the nation marches on to greater liberality, secularity and tolerance. That can surely be said about active participation in communal violence, although even participation in actual violence seems to be on the increase among diverse strata, in terms of caste as well as class. After all the evidence that has accumulated over the past decade or more—pertaining to the incremental expansion of the RSS itself, of all its fronts ranging from

Bajrang Dal to the BJP itself, and of the broad coalition it has been able to put in place, again ranging all the way from Shiv Sena to Mamata Banerjee and Chandrababu Naidu to the irrepressible Mayawati—one can no longer evade the perception that there are now formidable forces in the country, most notably in Western and Northern India, which partake of very active forms of communal politics and are even complicit in its violences. Elsewhere, these forces have made considerable inroads in Karnathaka and the Northeast, are poised to gain in Tamil Nadu and are mounting formidable pressure even in parts of Kerala and West Bengal. This signifies a sea-change, an unprecedented churning and shifting of the sands, in Indian politics, culture and social ethos. Not to face this fact amounts to an impermissibly populist romanticism, which cannot conceivably be a premise for strategies of resistance. . . .

We have long believed that since the RSS is a doggedly upper caste phenomenon it would be unable to make any substantial inroads into the middling and especially the lower castes. The first part of this assumption is certainly true: RSS is certainly a Brahminising caste phenomenon. However, given the highly segmented and fractured character of the caste system, the second part does not follow. Four basic points can be made in this regard. First, caste antagonisms in India are not only vertical but also horizontal, producing animosities among social factions occupying roughly analogous positions on the caste scale. Second, the sheer breadth of the horizontal divisions, all the way from the priestly to the forest-dweller, means that the upper and lower extremes always have the potential of coming together against the middling castes. Thirdly, *sanskritization* in the cultural sphere is and has been historically a patent analogue for upward mobility in class terms. Fourthly, there once was a time when caste was absolute and economic place relative to caste; we now have the economic class position (more often class aspiration) of diverse strata driving the politics of very novel kinds of caste coalitions. Each of these factors—and all four together—are capable of producing collisions unforeseen in the simple and binary upper–lower caste schema. Committed undoubtedly to an upper caste agenda, RSS has been nevertheless more adroit in utilizing caste contradictions than perhaps any other political force in the country, including the Congress in its heyday when it manipulated these contradictions before the advent of post-Emergency, post-Mandal politics. . . .

The same applies to the question of class and the professional elite. An argument was once made that since the RSS represents a form of Indian fascism, it was necessarily a petty bourgeois movement, at best rooted in the mercantile classes and castes; that, combined with its own propensity toward unrelenting violence, would imply that the big bourgeoisie would not throw its weight behind the BJP government. A cognate argument has been that RSS and its affiliates are culturally too vulgar, too “rustic” to draw support from the modern bourgeoisie. Both presumptions have proved to be false. . . . RSS also does the bidding of Indian Big Business but the nature of the bidding itself has changed;

this is fascism of the era of globalization and therefore wishes integration with imperialist capital; BJP and Big Business are quite agreed on that, hence the brisk commitment to neo-liberalism.

Likewise the issue of culture. The Indian bourgeoisie is not nearly as “modern” as we presume just because they own businesses and banks and industries. Market-friendly Hinduisation is quite compatible with neo-liberalism, cultural deracination and the rest. It is a rootless bourgeoisie, with no bourgeois culture of its own, and large sections of it are therefore particularly attracted to a brand of Hindu ideology that has no roots in traditional Hindu culture, even of the upper castes, and is closer to rightwing European Romanticism and postmodern cultural pastiche than anything else. RSS provides precisely that kind of aggressive non-traditional traditionalism. . . . The exodus of large numbers from among the professional strata and the techno-managerial elite toward the world of the Sangh has continued ever since [1991], even though many of them do not formally join the party. . . .

The Western preoccupation with “Islamic fundamentalism” on the one hand and military containment of China on the other predisposes the Western countries, the US in particular, to ignore the cruelties of Hindutva and take up India as strategically the “most allied ally” in the whole region stretching from the Philippines to Turkey. . . .

This image of a “strong India” led by a “strong party” which is itself led by a “strong” Vajpayee/Advani dispensation was further buttressed then in the way that BJP was to singlemindedly implement its coalition just as it saw fit. We have referred to it as the RSS/BJP government precisely because it is the RSS itself which chooses what limits it would impose upon itself, provisionally, in pursuit of coalition politics, while it has methodically humiliated every coalition partner . . . not only because BJP is by far the largest party in the coalition, . . . but because BJP is, within the coalition, actually the only ideological party with a political agenda while all the rest are either money-hungry buffoons or regional satraps; each of them has a price.

This image of a “strong” and “stable” India dovetails for large sections of the upper and middle classes almost effortlessly into an image of “strength” in the economic sphere as well, since they are the true beneficiaries of neo-liberal policies, deregulation of trade, sweeping privatisations, open import of foreign-produced, fetishistic commodities and all the rest. The “haves” now have more, the “have-nots” have even less than before. While farmers commit suicide for lack of food, the speculators and money-bags pick up the privatised public assets for a song. It is significant that the decade between the Ayodhya demolition and the Gujarat pogroms has also been the decade of break-neck liberalisation which has really gathered momentum during the years of BJP rule. . . . It is not for nothing that . . . the most recent pogroms have occurred in industrially and commercially the most advanced state in the country. Affluent youth, brought up on the consumptions and gadgetries of post-liberalisation India, were a very strong element in the perpetration of those crimes. . . .

What happens, then, to nationalism? It seems to me that if you do not define your nationalism in terms of anti-imperialism, as well as social and juridic equalities within the country, you have no choice but to define nationalism in terms of ethnicity, race, religion, or some other kind of primordial particularity which is bound to be highly divisive in a society as diverse as the Indian. These two visions—that of an anti-imperialist nationalism of secular civility; and the pro-imperialist nationalism of religious particularity and communal aggression—have collided in India since the time when anti-colonial struggle became a truly mass national movement, after 1919; RSS was founded specifically to combat the nationalism of civic secularity, integrative Indianness, anti-imperialist struggle, and to divide Hindus and non-Hindus along religious lines. This tendency remained an organised but still very much a minoritarian current for the two decades prior to Independence and for the quarter century thereafter. The counter-attack began during the 1970s and 80s, as we have summarised above, but it came fully into its own during the decade in question, 1992–2002, when communal fascism began its ascendancy in national politics. Religiously-based, irrational nationalism was now to displace and replace the anti-imperialist, rational foundations of secular nationalism. A market-friendly Hindutva was, then, the answer!

This struggle over the meaning of nationalism has been deeply intertwined with the equally fundamental struggle over what we may metaphorically call “the soul of the liberal Hindu.” The religious minorities in India—Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Budhists [sic] and others—have had a deeply civilising role in our society, as individual belief systems but more particularly as components of our unique syncretism(s). The same is true of those despised peoples whom the RSS is trying to portray, uniformly, as part of a “Hindu nation”: those who have been at the lowest rungs of the caste system, and those even below it. And, yet, to the extent that caste Hindus command immense powers both of numbers and of all kinds of material privilege, it is their role in the polity that is decisive. This is the power bloc that the RSS wishes to hegemonise. Using the symbols and motifs of religious belief, . . . it seeks the loyalty of this power bloc to its version of a syndicated religious belief which it defines for them, as well as a political project which organises for them. In short, the dream of the RSS is that it become Church and State simultaneously, for a large enough and powerful enough bloc—not even necessarily a major—that would then underwrite its state power as well as ideological hegemony. . . .

I have deliberately not raised the question of the broad range of cultural interventions that the RSS brigade has made across diverse fields from education to the media. Considering that the RSS has always defined itself as a cultural nationalism in opposition to the “territorial” nationalism of Gandhi and others, it has logically concentrated on the transformation of the culture and consciousness of the Indian people, and like any nationalism that grounds itself in religious identity RSS too has set out to unite the Hindus not as they are but to bestow upon them brand new kinds of interpretations of their Hindu identity

and its relationship with other religious identities. Its interventions thus range all the way from religious ritual to the electronic media, children's textbooks to institutes of research and higher learning, mass print media in the regional languages to representations of Indian culture in foreign lands. This ambition to take hold of the cultural consciousness had always been there, and the founding of each single shakha [branch] or shishu mandir [school] is seen as a step in the long march toward cultural supremacy. However, it is only with the BJP's coming to governmental power that the RSS has acquired the requisite material resources of the state and control over a substantial part of the institutional edifice of national culture with devastating effects. . . .

However, this decade has also witnessed resistance to that power across the nation. . . . Politics of the oppressed castes is still the great unpredictable element in the future of Indian politics, and any consolidation of them against the Brahminising project of the RSS still holds the great potential for defeating this project. Nor has the BJP been able to gain a parliamentary majority for itself, despite a decade of communal fires and the historic decline of the Congress; it still rules at the Centre by virtue of its coalition partners. Gujarat is in fact the only state where the BJP has acquired unassailable electoral power; significantly, it is there that the VHP has the largest membership among all the states, as proportion of the population, BJP holds little power in most states of the Union, and where it does, that is owed to reversible coalitions and precarious margins.

Outside (and alongside) the left parties, the most courageous and dogged resistance has in fact come from small and large activists' groups, cultural organisations, grassroots anti-communal mobilisations, writers, artists, academics, and notable sections of the media including some of the most influential sections of the electronic and print media. The cumulative spread and prominence of this resistance is possibly no less than that of the Hindutva brigade; what this resistance lacks, rather, is matching material resource, agencies of coordination, a "collective intellectual," a coherence, a strategy for accumulation of force. These are among our resources of hope.

[Aijaz Ahmad, "Somnath to Gandhinagar: A Night of Long Knives,"
in *Communalism, Civil Society, and the State: Reflections on
a Decade of Turbulence*, ed. K. N. Panikkar and Sukumar Muralidharan
(Delhi: Sahmat, 2002), 26–39.]

FOREIGN POLICY: SOVEREIGNTY

In the first two years after Independence, the Indian government was confronted with the horrendous riots and chaotic influx of refugees that followed Partition. Sardar Patel (ca. 1875–1950) as deputy prime minister was concerned with many details of domestic policy and administration, while Nehru, as the undisputed popular leader of the country, was determined to find a place for

India on the international scene—from which, since it was seen as a dependency of the British Empire, it had been largely excluded. This meant asserting India's sovereignty as an independent nation-state that charted its own path in the world.

PRIME MINISTER NEHRU: AVOIDING FOREIGN ENTANGLEMENTS

Many of Nehru's colleagues had little interest in international affairs or were clinging to a world where only Great Britain really mattered, and his speeches at the time to his colleagues, as well as to a wider public, are lessons in what India's foreign policy should be: how decisions were to be made, and how they were to be carried out.

We have sought to avoid foreign entanglements by not joining one bloc or the other. The natural result has been that neither of these big blocs looks on us with favour. They think we are undependable, because we cannot be made to vote this way or that way. Last year when our delegation went to the United Nations, it was the first time a more or less independent delegation went from India. It was looked at a little askance. They did not know what it was going to do. When they found we acted according to our own will, they did not like it. . . . There was a suspicion in the minds of the first group [USA] that we were really allied to the other group [USSR] in secret . . . and the other group thought that we were allied to the first group. . . .

This year there was a slight change in this attitude. We did many things that both groups dislike, but the comprehension came to them that we were not really allied to either group. . . . They did not like that, of course . . . but they respected us much more, because they realized that we had an independent policy. . . . They understood we stood for something.

Foreign affairs are utterly realistic. . . . It is in this background that I should like the House to consider international affairs. . . . [It is not about] some statesmen in America and the USSR or British imperialism lurking behind the curtain. We have talked so much about British imperialism that we cannot get rid of the habit. We propose to keep on the closest terms with other countries unless they themselves create difficulties. . . . We intend to cooperate with the United States of America and we intend cooperating fully with the Soviet Union. . . .

We are not citizens of a weak or mean country and I think it is foolish for us to get frightened, even from a military point of view, of the greatest of the Powers today. Not that I delude myself about what can happen to us if a great Power in a military sense goes against us; I have no doubt it can injure us. But after all in the past, as a national movement, we opposed one of the greatest of World Powers. We opposed it in a particular way and in a large measure succeeded in that way, and I have no doubt that if the worst comes to the worst—and in a

military sense we cannot meet these great Powers—it is far better for us to fight in our own way than submit to them and lose all the ideals we have.

[Jawaharlal Nehru, *Independence and After, 1946–1949* (Delhi: Publications Division, Government of India, 1949), 203–205, 210.]

KRISHNA MENON: BANDUNG, AND THE ORIGIN AND MEANING OF THE TERM “NON-ALIGNMENT”

“Non-alignment” is the term usually used for the foreign policy associated with Jawaharlal Nehru, but he does not use it in his early speeches quoted above, preferring to speak of being free from entangling alliances or identification with “blocs.” In 1955 India was one of the prominent organizers of the important Bandung Conference of Asian and African and a few other nations. The nations that assembled in Indonesia included several that were close to or linked to the Western or Soviet bloc, notably China, Pakistan, and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, but that sought to move closer to the less aligned nations. The Bandung group affirmed their independence and freedom of action, and adopted a declaration that was intended to promote world peace and cooperation; it incorporated principles of the UN Charter. China was notably successful in reducing fears of its potential influence through overseas Chinese, and also in warming its relations with India and other Asian nations. Many of the same nations reassembled in Belgrade in 1961 and began to call themselves “non-aligned.”

In India the term became associated with one of Nehru’s closest associates, Krishna Menon (1896–1974). As Indian ambassador to the United Nations, Menon was famed for his vituperative attacks on the United States. As defense minister in Nehru’s cabinet, he was blamed by Indian critics for pro-Soviet policies that weakened India’s military, leading to the defeat of the Indian forces in the Indo-China war in 1962.

This selection is from an interview he gave in 1964 to a Canadian academic, Michael Brecher, who wrote a well-received book on Nehru’s policies. Here “B” represents Brecher and “M” Menon.

B. I would like to begin, Mr. Menon, with some questions on non-alignment. Who conceived the policy? What was your role in this? What was Mr. Nehru’s role? In short, could you go back to the origins of non-alignment and its foundations?

M. Even if nobody conceived it, non-alignment was more or less a residue of historical circumstances. In 1945, immediately before India got her independence, it was all “one world”; but by 1947 it was “two worlds,” and we, for the first time, had to make up our minds on the issue, how we would function and what we would do. We would not go back to the West with its colonialism; and there was no question of our going the Soviet way; we did not even know them much. And with the attaining of our independence we desired not

to get involved in foreign entanglements. . . . Both the Prime Minister [Nehru] and I exclaimed or thought aloud *simultaneously*, “Why should we be with anybody?”

B. But the word “non-alignment” itself: who conceived this and when?

M. That, I used much later—spontaneously. I think it was at the United Nations but I couldn’t say for certain. We were being ridiculed about being “neutral.” I said then, “We are not neutral; we are non-aligned. We are not aligned to either side, we are non-aligned.” In fact, the Prime Minister didn’t approve very much of the word at the beginning, but it had quickly gained currency.

B. It was, then, at some meeting in 1950?

M. No. No. It was later than that. I don’t think you will see the word “non-aligned” used that early—to the best of my recollection. I think it was probably used some time in ’53–’54; that is my recollection, but you had better check up on that. But the word “non-alignment” was first used at the United Nations.

B. Mr. Menon, you would agree, I think, that in any foreign policy, non-alignment or other, there is bound to be a combination of “national interest” and idealist considerations. One wonders, in the Indian case, to what extent non-alignment was considered to be an instrument of the “national interest” and to what extent it was simply a projection of Indian ideals—or to what extent both were involved?

M. . . . What is non-alignment? It is merely independence in external affairs. What are external affairs? They are only a projection of internal or national policy in the field of International Relations.

B. Would you go so far as to say that non-alignment is the logical extension of nationalism?

M. Logical extension of nationalism, yes, and of the conflict between nationalism and military blocs, the fact that we had little in common with the *raison d’être* of the blocs; with the West, because to us the West meant Empire.

B. But is it not true that, as Mr. Nehru and you conceived a foreign policy for India, non-alignment was thought of as the most efficient path to economic development?

M. Yes, but I don’t think anyone thought about it that way at the time, because the question of foreign aid and things of that kind, which are so prominent today, did not figure in our minds very much. We didn’t think back from economics to politics. . . .

B. Apart from non-alignment as the core of India’s foreign policy, did you, in the early stage at any rate, think of it as something that could make a genuine contribution to international peace?

M. I did, but to what extent the Prime Minister did, I don’t know. I had an idea of what you might call the theory of it, but his mind didn’t work like that.

B. How precisely did his mind work on these questions?

M. He would pick up something which by intuition appealed to him and make use of it. What is more, if I said something and he adopted and repeated it that is all that the world would know about it. . . . I said to him [Nehru] at one time: "There is a difference between our national development—our nationalism and Western nationalism—in this way: in the West economic development came first and political independence came afterwards, in the sense of universal franchise, by the pressure of the working classes and so on; but here we have had a full fledged political revolution first—everybody is equal—and economic development has to come afterwards." Ours is the reverse process, which will result either in instability or the death of democracy and the growth of Hitler Fascism, or in just plain but progressive decay.

We said from the very beginning that non-alignment was not just a policy of a nation but one of those things that the world requires; otherwise the world remains divided into two camps opposed to each other. There must be something, an "area of peace," I called it, not territorially, but politically, diplomatically, morally, etc.

[Michael Brecher, *India and World Politics: Krishna Menon's View of the World* (New York: Praeger, 1968), 3–5, 8–10, 13.]

PRIME MINISTER NEHRU: THE BETRAYAL OF INDIA BY THE CHINESE

As the Cold War developed in the 1950s, and as part of his effort to unite the non-aligned nations of Asia and Africa, Nehru championed India–China friendship and backed the efforts of the new communist government in China to gain membership in the United Nations. From the late 1950s, however, relations between the two nations deteriorated over boundary disputes and over India's acceptance of Tibetan refugees, including the Dalai Lama. In 1959 Chinese troops occupied territory claimed by both China and India. Chou En-Lai wrote to Nehru that he was surprised that India was claiming vast areas of China because of borders drawn by the British imperialists. Nehru replied that the boundaries of India had been "settled for centuries by history, geography, custom and tradition."¹⁴ After diplomatic efforts failed to resolve the dispute, a short border war broke out in 1962 between Indian and Chinese forces in the Himalayas—in what is now known as Aksai Chin, in Kashmir, and in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, which from 1947 until 1972 was called the North East Frontier Agency, or NEFA. This was a war for which Indian troops were unprepared, and they were decisively beaten. Despite his policy of non-alignment, during this crisis Nehru requested—and received—assistance from the American military in the form of equipment.

This demoralizing conflict with China had a devastating personal impact on Nehru, whose health declined rapidly thereafter. He saw the border war as a betrayal by a nation for whose place in the world he had fought, and it ended his dream of peace between the two heirs of ancient Asian civilization. In January 1964

Nehru suffered a stroke; he died in May. Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh remain disputed territories.

Comrades, friends and fellow countrymen. I am speaking to you on the radio after a long interval. I feel however that I must speak to you about the grave situation that has arisen on our frontiers because of continuing and unabashed aggression by Chinese forces. We are men and women of peace in this country, conditioned to ways of peace. . . . Because of this, we endeavored to follow a policy of peace, even when aggression took place on our territory in Ladakh five years ago. We have done our utmost to prevent war from engulfing the world, but all our efforts have been in vain insofar as our own frontier is concerned, where a powerful and unscrupulous opponent, not caring for peace or peaceful methods, has continually threatened us and has even carried these threats into action.

The time has therefore come for us to realize fully this menace that threatens the freedom of our people and the independence of our country. To conserve that freedom and integrity of our territory, we must gird up our loins and face this greatest menace that has come to us since we became independent. I have no doubt in my mind that we shall succeed. Everything else is secondary to freedom of our people and of our motherland, and if necessary, everything else has to be sacrificed in this great crisis. . . .

There have been five years of continuous aggression on the Ladakh frontier. Our frontier in NEFA remained largely free from this aggression. Just when we were discussing ways and means of reducing tension and there was even some chance of representatives of the two countries meeting to consider this matter, a new and fresh aggression took place on the NEFA border. . . . This was a curious way of lessening tension. It is typical of the way the Chinese government have treated us.

Our border with China in the NEFA region is well known and well established from ages past. It is sometimes called the McMahon Line, but this line that separates India from Tibet was a high ridge which divides the watershed. This has been established as the border by history, tradition and treaties long before it was called the McMahon Line. The Chinese have in many ways acknowledged it as the border, although they have called the McMahon Line illegal. The Chinese laid claim in their maps to a large part of NEFA, which has been under our administration for a long time. . . . Yet on this peaceful border where no trouble or fighting had occurred for a long time, they committed aggression and this also in very large numbers and after vast preparations for a major attack.

I am grieved at the setbacks that have occurred to our troops on this frontier and the reverses we have had. They were overwhelmed by vast numbers and by big artillery, mountain guns and heavy mortars. There may be some more reverses in that area, but one thing is certain—that the final result of this conflict

will be in our favor. . . . We have to meet a powerful and unscrupulous opponent. We have therefore to build up our strength and power to face this situation adequately and with confidence. We must steel our will and direct the nation's energies and resources to this one end.

We must change our procedures from the slow-moving methods of peacetime to those which produce results quickly. We must build up our military strength by all means at our disposal. But military strength is not by itself enough. It has to be supported fully by the industry of the country and by increasing our production in every way that is necessary for us. I would appeal to all our workers not to indulge in strikes or act in any other way that comes in the way of increasing production. No antinational or antisocial activities can be tolerated when one is in peril.

We shall have to carry a heavy burden. . . . The price of freedom will have to be paid in full measure and no price is too great for the freedom of our people and of our motherland.

We Cannot Submit. I earnestly trust and I believe that all parties and groups in the country will unite in this great enterprise and put aside their controversies and arguments, which have no place today, and present a solid united front to all those who seek to endanger our freedom and integrity. But the principal thing is for us to devote ourselves to forge the national will to freedom and to work hard to that end. There is no time limit to this.

We shall carry on the struggle as long as we do not win because we cannot submit to an aggressor or the domination of others. . . . Do not believe in rumors. Do not believe those who have faint hearts. This is a time of trial and testing for all of us and we have to steel ourselves to the task. Perhaps we were growing too soft and taking things for granted, but freedom can never be taken for granted. It requires always awareness, strength and austerity.

I invite all of you, to whatever party or group or religion you belong, to be comrades, in this great struggle that has been forced upon us. I have full faith in our people and in the cause and in the future of our country. Perhaps that future requires some such testing and stiffening for us. We have followed a policy of non-alignment and sought the friendship of all nations. I believe in that policy fully and we shall continue to follow it. We are not going to give up our basic principles because of the present difficulty. . . . I want you to hold your heads high and have faith and full confidence in the great future that we envisage for our country. Jai Hind! [Long live India!]

[Excerpts from Nehru's "Broadcast to the Nation" on the Indian-Chinese border clashes, *New York Times*, Oct. 23, 1962.]

PRIME MINISTER INDIRA GANDHI: INDIA AND THE WORLD

Perhaps the single most careful and detailed statement on India's foreign policy was made by Indira Gandhi (1916–1984), who was prime minister of India for three terms

from 1966 to 1977, then after an electoral defeat was reelected in 1980, serving until her assassination in 1984. Her son Rajiv Gandhi succeeded her as prime minister from 1984 to 1989. After his assassination, his wife Sonia assumed a powerful role in Indian politics, and their son and daughter, Rahul and Priyanka, are both active in politics today. Other members of the family have been ambassadors and governors of states, justifying the term “Nehru Dynasty” that is often applied to the clan.

Mrs. Gandhi prepared this speech in 1972 primarily for foreign audiences (especially ones in New York, at the Council on Foreign Relations and Columbia University). India’s foreign policy, she insisted, was linked with the two great concerns of India’s national life: safeguarding Indian sovereignty and ending the blight of domestic poverty. The preservation of international peace, she always insisted (as had her father before her), served these ends as well as the larger humanitarian vision of the betterment of life everywhere. Pakistan remains in her view a central focus of India’s abiding concern, but when Mrs. Gandhi uses the phrase “some powers” or “third party” she usually means the United States.

We have also tried to have normal relations with Pakistan. Yet, successive governments of Pakistan based the survival and unity of their country on the idea of confrontation with India. This has stood in the way of cooperation which would have been to our mutual benefit. India was partitioned in 1947 to solve what the British portrayed as irreconcilable Hindu–Muslim antagonism. Pakistan was based on the medieval notion that religion alone constituted nationhood. Encouraged by the imperial power, the Muslim League claimed that Muslim majority areas were entitled to become an independent nation. Thus, Pakistan was born a geographical curiosity, its two halves separated by a thousand miles of Indian territory. India was left with a very large number of Muslims; they formed the largest of her many minorities. . . .

Pakistan, on the other hand, clung to the political ideology which had led to partition. Those who came to power in Pakistan had sided with the colonial power in undivided India and had opposed the national struggle. Those ruling elements, especially after the establishment of military dictatorship, set Pakistan on a course of pointless and seemingly endless conflict with India. Just as in the earlier days when the colonial power had used religious sentiments to blunt the nationalist drive in India, some powers sought to use Pakistan to offset India. . . .

Kashmir, as early as October 1947, was the first victim of aggression by Pakistan. . . . A large part of the state has been under Pakistan’s occupation for many years. India does not intend to recapture this territory by force; on several occasions we have given this assurance to Pakistan and have offered to conclude a “no war” pact. Pakistan has rejected this offer repeatedly, trying to invoke third-party intervention in our affairs. . . .

The immediate background to the latest aggression against us in 1971 was the other battle which Pakistan was waging for many months against its own

citizens of East Pakistan (as it then was). . . . How could we ignore a conflict which took place on our very border and overflowed into our own territory? Ten million destitute refugees poured into densely populated areas which were also politically sensitive owing to the activities of Marxists and the Left extremists we call Naxalites. This posed unbearable strains on our social and administrative institutions. The terrible stories of genocide . . . created a volatile situation for us also. . . .

In the last week of November [1971], President Yahya Khan [of Pakistan] publicly announced that war would begin in ten days, and sure enough, on the tenth day there was a massive air attack on seven of our border cities and a ground attack all along our western border. Thus did Pakistan extend its war to India.

However, when 14 days later, on December 16, 1971, Pakistan troops surrendered on the eastern front, India unilaterally announced a cease fire on the western front also. On March 25, 1972, we withdrew our troops from Bangladesh in consultation with the new government. The political map of the sub-continent had been redrawn and the notion of an inherent and insuperable antagonism between a secular India and a predominant Muslim state had been discredited. . . .

I have dwelt at length on Pakistan because the problems of the sub-continent for their impact on us [are] immediate and deep. But we want better relations with China also. Even though we were fully absorbed in our own struggle for liberty, we supported China's parallel fight against imperialism. . . . We were among the first in 1949 to welcome the establishment of the People's Republic. Much to our disappointment, the last two decades have failed to fulfil our initial hope that India and China, both great Asian nations, newly independent and faced with similar problems, would learn from and assist each other on the wider international scene. . . . But the events of the 1950's brought tension and misunderstanding, culminating in the entry and occupation of thousands of square miles of India territory in 1962. . . . It would be an over-simplification to regard this merely as the result of a border dispute. . . . [China's] persistent, though futile efforts to promote internal subversion—leave us no option but to infer that the border dispute was the outcome of a more complex policy which was aimed at undermining India's stability and at obstructing her rapid and orderly progress. . . .

The Soviet Union shares the Indian view on the maintenance of peace and the elimination of racialism and colonialism. . . . When matters [that] vitally concerned our national security and integrity such as Goa, Kashmir and more lately Bangladesh, became matters of international controversy, the Soviet assessment of the merits of the case coincided largely with our own. . . . Economic relations with the Soviet Union are easier for us since we repay them through the exports of commodities. . . . The Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation concluded last year [1971] grew logically from this expanding

relationship. . . . There is nothing in the treaty to which any reasonable person or government could take exception. . . . Yet there has been some misapprehensions that the Treaty dilutes India's non-alignment. It is strange that such criticism comes mostly from those who have vehemently denounced non-alignment all along. In the text of the treaty itself there is explicit recognition and endorsement of India's policy of non-alignment.

Our relations with the United States started off rather well. At that time, the American people and government showed considerable sympathy for the colonial peoples who were struggling for independence and, particularly, for India. However, this phase was short-lived. With the rise of the United States to a dominant world position, Washington's concern and respect for the national independence of India receded into the background. Everything was viewed solely in the context of checking communism and containing first the Soviet Union, subsequently China, and now once again the Soviet Union. There was a feverish building of military blocs and a continuous extension of a network of bases stretching across oceans and continents. The logical and practical consequence of this policy was to divide the world into two camps and to expect each country to belong to one or the other—preferably the Western bloc. . . .

To our grave concern, the US policy, as it developed, impinged seriously on our vital interests. The admission of Pakistan into the US controlled system of alliances and the massive supply of arms to Pakistan were ostensibly part of the US grand design against communism. . . . Has the US succeeded in containing communism? On the contrary, has not the US been compelled to build bridges with the Non-aligned and to woo the opposite bloc—the hated Communists? I have no doubt that if we had followed the advice of the Western bloc, conditions in India would have deteriorated and the extremists would have been strengthened.

In regard to Bangladesh, and during the December war, the United States openly backed Pakistan at the cost of basic human values. This further strained our relations. I do not wish to analyse the US role at that time or to go into the misrepresentations which were circulated. But it is necessary to take note of the dispatch of the warship *Enterprise* to support a ruthless military dictatorship and to intimidate a democracy and the extraordinary similarity of the attitudes adopted by the United States and China. Imagine our feelings. The original misunderstanding with the United States had arisen because of our contacts with China, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. We find it difficult to understand why, when the US policy toward these countries changed, the resentment against us increased.

We do not believe in permanent estrangement. We admire the achievements of the American people. Indeed, a large number of Americans expressed sympathetic support for the cause of Bangladesh and India during the last year. We are grateful for the assistance of the United States in many areas of our development. We are ready to join in any serious effort to arrive at a deeper

appreciation of each other's point of view and to improve relations. A great power must take into account the existence not only of countries with comparable power, but of the multitude of others who are no longer willing to be pawns on a global chessboard. Above all, the United States has yet to resolve the inner contradictions between the traditions of the founding fathers and of Lincoln and the external image it gives of a super-power pursuing the cold logic of power politics.

On fundamental questions such as disarmament, the abolition of nuclear weapons, the continuing struggle against colonialism and racialism, the widening gulf between the haves and the have-nots, the war in Vietnam and the conflict in the Middle East, our stand has been consistent over the years and has been clearly stated in appropriate forums. In this article, I have preferred to focus attention on a situation in our sub-continent because it is our special concern, and has significance beyond geographical frontiers. In considering the policies of some major powers, I have confined myself to bilateral relations which are intimately connected with their attitudes to the sub-continent as a whole. . . .

Each country has its own heritage and distinct personality which it naturally wishes to develop in its own way. But we must also bear in mind our community of interests and take positive initiatives for working together among ourselves and with other countries in order to make a richer contribution towards the evolution of a world more livable for all and of a social order more in consonance with the yearnings of modern man.

[Indira Gandhi, *Selected Speeches and Writings*, 3:630–637.]

NUCLEAR POWER AND FOREIGN POLICY: AFTER 1974

The single most important event for India's foreign policy, one fraught with meaning for India's relation with the world, was probably neither the Pakistani intrusion into Jammu and Kashmir in 1947, nor the secession of Bangladesh in 1971, but India's explosion of a nuclear device in 1974. There is a huge literature discussing the significance of India's nuclear position, but here only four important Indian reactions will be noted.

PRIME MINISTER INDIRA GANDHI: "BUDDHA SMILED"

Preparations for the first nuclear test were made in great secrecy, and it is said that only three people, aside from the scientists actually involved in the construction of the device, knew about it: Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, and her private secretaries P. N. Haksar and D. P. Dhar. None of the Cabinet knew, including the defense secretary. Because of the extreme precautions designed to prevent foreign intelligences

from learning about the preparations, there are many conflicting accounts of the event, including its alleged code name, "Smiling Buddha." The test was conducted on the Buddhist festival of Buddha Purnima, but this seems to have been coincidental, and the story that the success of the experiment was conveyed to the prime minister with the phrase, "The Buddha is smiling," is also undocumented.

Mrs. Gandhi's announcement of the successful nuclear test at Pokhran, in the Rajasthan desert, on May 18, 1974, was greeted with jubilation throughout the country, except by a few of the old followers of Mahatma Gandhi, who saw this as further betrayal of his legacy. The American ambassador, Patrick Moynihan, voiced the official US reaction when he told Mrs. Gandhi that she had made a huge mistake. "Here you were the No. 1 hegemonic power in South Asia. . . . Now in a decade's time, some Pakistani general will call you up and say, 'I have four nuclear weapons and I want Kashmir.' . . . And then what will you do?"¹⁵ However annoyed Mrs. Gandhi may have been by this American presumptuousness, her only response was silence.

Honourable Members, you are aware that at 8.05 hours on May 18, 1974 our Atomic Energy Commission successfully carried out an underground nuclear explosion at a depth of more than 100 metres in the Rajasthan desert. This experiment was part of the research and development work which the Atomic Energy Commission has been carrying on in pursuance of our national objectives of harnessing atomic energy for peaceful purposes.

Honourable members may recall that on November 15, 1972, I had stated in the Lok Sabha that "The Atomic Energy Commission is studying conditions under which peaceful nuclear explosions carried out underground could be of economic benefit to India without causing environmental hazards." Exactly one year later, on November 15, 1973, I informed Honourable Members of the Rajya Sabha . . . that after satisfactory answers to the problems of the possible effects on environmental and ecological conditions are available, the question of actual underground tests for peaceful purposes could be considered. . . . All the material, equipment and the personnel in this project were totally Indian. India had not violated any international law or obligation or any commitment in this regard to any country.

This experiment has evoked mixed responses from various countries. While the developing nations, have, by and large, welcomed the experiment as a step in the research and development work carried out by India in the field of atomic energy for peaceful purposes, the advanced nations, with some exceptions, have not shown equal understanding. The United States . . . has reiterated that the policy of that government is against nuclear proliferation. The USSR has noted that India has carried out a research programme striving to keep level with the world technology in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. . . . China officially reported the event without commenting on the explosion. The reaction of the Government of Japan has been to express regret for the experiment. . . .

The Government of India is unable to comprehend the repeated talk of nuclear blackmail indulged in by the representatives of Pakistan. . . . [I have] stated that India is willing to share her nuclear technology with Pakistan as she is willing to share it with other countries, provided proper conditions for understanding and trust are created. . . .

No technology is evil in itself; it is the use that nations make of technology which determines its character. India does not accept the principle of apartheid in any matter and technology is no exception.

[Indira Gandhi, to Lok Sabha, July 22, 1974, in
Selected Speeches and Writings 3:413–415.]

DR. RAJA RAMANNA: “NOISES OF PROTEST”

Raja Ramanna (1925–2004) was director of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre and chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission at the time when India carried out its first nuclear test. He held virtually every important post in India’s scientific establishment, and received the country’s highest national honors. In addition, he was a student of Sanskrit, wrote on Indian classical music, and was an accomplished Western classical pianist.

Pokhran came as a surprise to the world. They hadn’t expected such an achievement from a developing nation. Some sent us congratulatory letters and several others protested. Inevitably and inexorably, the protests mounted. The objections were predictable variations on a theme: who were we to upset the balance maintained by the superpowers, a privilege bestowed only upon those who had won the Second World War? In time the pressures on India, by way of embargoes and other sanctions, reached a nearly unbearable level. It appeared the advanced nations were determined to crush India for its temerity. Pokhran exposed the hypocrisy of those nations who talked on non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It was clear that these countries applied one set of standards to themselves and another to the rest of the world. Accompanying all the noises of protest was genuine shock that a country like India was capable of something as sophisticated as a [nuclear explosion]. The West looked upon India as one of the most backward countries in the world. Their criterion for measuring progress was different in the sense that they judged the success of a country by its material acquisitions and its overt proof of development—sanitation, quality of roads and general sense of discipline. India didn’t conform to any of these, and in this context alone, it seemed somewhat relevant when the Western world expressed bewilderment, coupled with fear and panic, at the success of Pokhran.

[Raja Ramanna, *Years of Pilgrimage: An Autobiography*
(Delhi: Viking, 1991), 92–93.]

PRIME MINISTER A. B. VAJPAYEE:
EVOLUTION IN INDIA'S NUCLEAR POLICY

As leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party, Atal Bihari Vajpayee was prime minister in 1996 for only a few months, until his party was defeated, but the BJP won the election in 1998, and he was prime minister until the BJP was voted out in 2004. Shortly after he took office in 1998, he announced that India had tested a nuclear weapon, so that the country had become the sixth avowed nuclear-weapon power, along with the United States, Russia, Great Britain, France, and China. The international community reacted strongly, with many nations, led by the United States, instituting a boycott of India that prevented further nuclear cooperation in all fields. Pakistan was soon to announce its successful nuclear test. Vajpayee's statement on the evolution of India's nuclear policy essentially built on India's position as stated by Mrs. Gandhi.

Sir, I rise to inform the House of momentous developments that have taken place while we were in recess. On 11 May, India successfully carried out three underground nuclear tests. Two more underground tests on 13 May completed the planned series of tests. I would like this House to join me in paying fulsome tribute to our scientists, engineers and defence personnel whose singular achievements have given us a renewed sense of national pride and self-confidence. Sir, in addition to the statement I make, I have also taken the opportunity to submit to the House a paper entitled "Evolution of India's Nuclear Policy." . . .

In 1965, along with a small group of non-aligned countries, India put forward the idea of an international non-proliferation agreement under which the nuclear weapon states would agree to give up their arsenals provided other countries refrained from developing or acquiring such weapons. This balance of rights and obligations was not accepted. In the sixties our security concerns deepened. The country sought security guarantees but the countries we turned to were unable to extend to us the expected assurances. As a result, we made it clear that we would not be able to sign the NPT (Non Proliferation Treaty). The Lok Sabha debated the issue on 5th April, 1968. Prime Minister late Shrimati Indira Gandhi assured the House that "we shall be guided entirely by our self-enlightenment and the considerations of national security." This was a turning point and this House strengthened the decision of the then Government by reflecting a national consensus. . . .

India is now a nuclear weapon state. This is a reality that cannot be denied. It is not a conferment that we seek; nor is it a status for others to grant. It is an endowment to the nation by our scientists and engineers. It is India's due, the right of one-sixth of humankind. Our strengthened capability adds to our sense of responsibility. We do not intend to use these weapons for aggression or for mounting threats against any country, these are weapons of self-defence, to ensure that India is not subjected to nuclear threats or coercion. We do not intend

to engage in an arms race. . . . In this fiftieth year of our Independence, we stand at a defining moment in our history. The rationale for the Government's decision is based on the same policy tenets that have guided us for five decades. These policies have been sustained successfully because of an underlying national consensus. It is vital to maintain the consensus as we approach the next millennium. In my statement today and in the paper placed before the House, I have elaborated on the rationale behind the Government's decision, and outlined our approach for the future. The present decision and future actions will continue to reflect a commitment to sensibilities and obligations of an ancient civilisation, a sense of responsibility and restraint, but a restraint born of the assurance of action, not of doubts or apprehension. Avoiding triumphalism, let us work together towards our shared objective in ensuring that as we move towards a new millennium, India will take its rightful place in the international community.

[*Lok Sabha Debates*, May 27, 1998.

<http://www.fas.org/news/india/1998/05/980527-india-pm.htm>.]

PRIME MINISTER MANMOHAN SINGH: ON THE NUCLEAR TREATY WITH THE UNITED STATES

In 2005, with considerable fanfare, President Bush announced that he and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had committed the United States and India to a historic breakthrough in relations by agreeing to expand cooperation in civilian nuclear activities, space programs, high-technology trade, and other forms of commerce. The American administration was able to get the arrangements approved by Congress with large majorities, but Prime Minister Manmohan Singh ran into very considerable opposition. American negotiators found, apparently to their surprise, that there was very strong opposition in India, including from partners in Singh's own coalition government, and that many people regarded the arrangement as an infringement of India's sovereignty. Leading members of the scientific community argued that India's nuclear research programs would be hampered by American laws; the Left revived anti-American slogans; and the Right called upon the deep wells of nationalism. Thus all circled back to sovereignty, the unity and integrity of the nation, self-sufficiency, and non-alignment as the traditional basis of India's foreign policy.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh attempted to address these concerns in a long speech in the Rajya Sabha on August 17, 2006, only the main points of which are excerpted here.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, as I stand before this august House, I would like to share with you and the Hon. Members the vision [of] Jawaharlal Nehru, on the eve of Independence: "Our task will not be complete so long as we cannot get rid of chronic mass poverty, ignorance and disease." Sir, it is my conviction that mass poverty can be removed only if we have a fast expanding economy. . . . If India is to grow at the rate of 8 per cent to 10 per cent a year and, maybe, more, India

needs rising amounts of energy. . . . Soon after the Pokhran Tests in 1974, I became Minister for Finance of the Atomic Energy Commission and . . . we worked out the role of nuclear energy in meeting the deficit in our energy requirements. By this context, we must never forget the primary motivation for India's nuclear programme was the production of energy, defence came much later. . . .

It is my belief that the nuclear order that prevailed in the world for thirty odd years, which has imposed restrictions on nuclear trade with India—if this order is not changed, India's development options, particularly its quest for energy options, will face, to put it mildly, a great degree of uncertainty. . . . I think the Planning Commission has done some work, and they have come to the conclusion that having the nuclear option is something which will give us greater degree of security on the energy front. . . .

Two types of comments have been made during the discussion in the House. The first set of issues pertains to the basic orientation of our foreign policy. Some Hon'ble Members have observed that by engaging in discussions with, and allegedly acquiescing in the demands made by the United States, we have compromised the independent nature of our foreign policy. The second set of issues pertain to deviations from the July 18 Joint Statement and the March 2 Separation Plan [separation of civilian and military nuclear uses]. Many of the points raised by the Hon'ble Members have also been aired outside Parliament, notably also by some senior members of the scientific establishment. Overall, a listing of the important concerns includes the following: that the India-US Nuclear initiative and more particularly the content of the proposed legislation in the US Congress, could undermine the autonomy of our decision-making; limit the options or compromise the integrity of our strategic programme; and adversely affect the future of our scientific research and development. . . .

I recognize that many of these concerns are borne out of genuine conviction that nothing should be done that would undermine long standing policies that have a bearing on India's vital national security interests. [Our commitment to] nuclear disarmament remains unwavering. . . . Pending global nuclear disarmament, there is no question of India joining the NPT [Non-proliferation Treaty] as a non-nuclear weapon state, or accepting full-scope safeguards as a requirement for nuclear supplies to India, now or in the future. . . . There is provision in the proposed US law that were India to detonate a nuclear explosive device, the US will have the right to cease further cooperation. Our position on this is unambiguous. The US has been intimated that reference to nuclear detonation in the India-US Bilateral Nuclear Cooperation Agreement as a condition for future cooperation is not acceptable to us. . . . We are very firm in our determination that agreement with the United States on Civil Nuclear Energy in no way affects the requirements of our strategic programme.

[From the Prime Minister's office: <http://pmindia.nic.in/pmsinparliament.php?nodeid=27>.]

POSTSCRIPT: WHO SPEAKS FOR INDIA?

In this final section of chapter 8, we feature not one particular viewpoint on India, but the characterization, as being particularly Indian, of one style of expression.

AMARTYA SEN AND THE INDIAN PLURALITY OF IDENTITIES

Selections from Amartya Sen's *Development as Freedom* were presented earlier in this chapter. In a more recent book of essays, Sen has tried to highlight the enduring Indian traditions of discussion, argumentation, and wide-ranging philosophical exploration. The paragraphs to follow are taken from his essay about "the argumentative Indian."

It would be a great mistake . . . to assume that because of the possible effectiveness of well-tutored and disciplined arguments, the argumentative tradition must, in general, favour the privileged and the well-educated, rather than the dispossessed and the deprived. Some of the most powerful arguments in Indian intellectual history have, in fact, been about the lives of the least privileged groups, which have drawn on the substantive force of these claims, rather than on the cultivated brilliance of well-trained dialectics.

Does the richness of the tradition of argument make much difference to subcontinental lives today? I would argue it does, and in a great many different ways. It shapes our social world and the nature of our culture. It has helped to make heterodoxy the natural state of affairs in India . . . : persistent arguments are an important part of our public life. It deeply influences Indian politics, and is particularly relevant, I would argue, to the development of democracy in India and the emergence of its secular priorities. . . .

The issue relates directly to the plurality of identities I have already discussed, and to the scope for choice in the determination of identity. People's relation to . . . India need not be mediated through the "culture" of the family in which they may have been born, nor through its religion. People may choose to seek identity with more than one of these predefined cultures, or, just as plausibly, with none. People are also free to decide that their cultural or religious identity is less important to them than, say, their political convictions, or their literary persuasions, or their professional commitments. It is a choice for them to make, no matter how they are placed in the "federation of cultures."

To conclude, the inclusionary view of Indian identity, which we have inherited and which I have tried to defend, is not only not parasitic on, or partial to, a Hindu identity, it can hardly be a federation of the different religious communities in India: Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Jain, Parsee and others. Indian identity need not be mediated through other group identities in a federal way. Indeed, India is not, in this view, sensibly seen even as a federal combination of different communities.

I quoted earlier a statement of Jamsetji Tata of an affirmatively nationalist kind, when—commenting on the excellence that young Indians can achieve through education—he said that Indian students “can not only hold their own against the best rivals in Europe on the latter’s ground, but can beat them hollow.” That expression of pride—even perhaps of arrogance—is not the pride of a Parsee who happened to be an Indian, but of an Indian who happened to be a Parsee. There is a distinction here, and it is, I would argue, both important and in need of some understanding right now.

[Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture, and Identity* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2005), 12 and 356.]



Chapter 9

PAKISTAN, 1947 AND AFTER

THE STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL IDENTITY

In July 1947 Muhammad Ali Jinnah, called Quaid-e Azam (the Great Leader), the undisputed leader of the movement that had led to the creation of Pakistan, was invited by the members of the Muslim League branch in London to address them in celebration of the achievement of Pakistan. He had to decline, but he reminded them that there still remained the far greater task “of constructing and building up Pakistan, which will require every ounce of our energy; but by the grace of God we shall build up this new greatest Muslim sovereign state in the world with complete unity, discipline and faith.”¹ The readings in this chapter, under the general rubric of the struggle for national identity, are intended to show the enormity of that task.

Pakistan was made up of two areas, referred to as “wings,” which were separated by a thousand miles of unfriendly India, in every way a more powerful nation. Partition meant the division of the provinces of Punjab and Bengal, which had been reasonably distinct political entities within both the British and the Mughal empires; the former, Punjab, had even been independent under Ranjit Singh from 1799 to 1849, until the British conquered it. The new provinces of West Punjab and East Bengal (later West Pakistan and East Pakistan) went to Pakistan, and East Punjab and West Bengal went to India. The new provinces were divided from their old territorial and cultural origins by boundary lines decided by the Border Commission based on census data showing the religious adherence of the populations of contiguous districts in Punjab and

Bengal, although in most areas there was a mixture of religions. Some attention was paid to the canals and rivers and transportation systems that determined the economies of the regions, but the true meaning of Partition was that inevitably the social and economic relations of the two areas were disrupted. In human terms, it meant millions of refugees fleeing from one new nation to the other, with massacres, rapes, and looting. India and Pakistan were not at war; instead, both sides tried desperately to contain the violence. What is astonishing is the extent to which, during the last six months of 1947, they gradually succeeded. What did not end, in either India or Pakistan, was historical memory, which, as the French essayist Paul Valéry put it, is the most dangerous product of the human intellect, for “it causes dreams, it intoxicates whole peoples, gives them false memories, . . . keeps their old wounds open, . . . and makes nations bitter.”²

In 2007, as Pakistan celebrated its sixtieth anniversary, some commentators praised the country for its economic progress and its support of several excellent institutions of higher learning. Others saw Pakistan as a failed state on the brink of economic chaos, a nuclear threat to the world, a terrorist state, and a captive of Islamic fundamentalists, failing in its promise to support the American-led coalition in its war against terrorism.³ A common explanation of the fate of Pakistan, in contrast to that of India, is that Pakistan was committed by its origins to an Islamic religious ideology unsuited to the modern world. An opposite explanation is that Pakistan deserted the imperatives of Islam that justified its creation, in order to follow the false idols of Western society. A third account of the decay of the country alleges that it has been betrayed by its military and political classes, who continue to engage in brutal struggles for power. Still another account blames Pakistan’s civil and military rulers for tying themselves to the United States, thereby becoming a tool of American imperialism.

An obvious difficulty was that the new state had to achieve the very different goals of the very diverse peoples who became its citizens either through the drawing of artificial boundary lines or through migration from India at the time of Partition. The contradictory expectations of different regional and social groups have been a constant feature of Pakistan’s history, as was illustrated most powerfully by the secession of its eastern wing to become Bangladesh in 1971. There have also been uprisings in Baluchistan; ethnic protests in Sindh and NWFP; difficulties in bringing the tribal areas, situated on the Pakistan–Afghanistan border, into the national mainstream; and the dispute with India over Kashmir. On quite another level, there were the expectations of the Westernized elites for a modern, democratic society. Although twenty-first-century Pakistan is a Muslim-majority country, with 97 percent of its population practicing some form of Islam, religious factionalism and competition, extending even to persecution, have long caused social division: Among Muslims, Shias (5–20 percent) and Ahmadis (2.3 percent)—who were declared non-Muslim in 1974—experience sporadic persecution from Sunnis; and Christians (1.6 percent),

Hindus (1.6 percent), and various other tiny communities, such as Baha'is, Sikhs, and Parsis, also complain of being targeted in a state that does not adequately protect their religious freedoms.

The selections in chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 show that Muslim leaders had enunciated the need for political arrangements that would permit Indian Muslims to develop, as Muhammad Iqbal put it, "on the lines of their own culture and traditions."⁴ The future of Islam as a cultural force in India depended upon the autonomy of the regions in the subcontinent where Muslims were in a majority. Jinnah restated this attitude in his negotiations on behalf of the Muslim League with the British and the Indian National Congress in 1946–1947.

Looking back over the history of Pakistan since 1947, as reflected in academic studies, journalism, official reports, and the speeches and writings of political leaders, we can see that while a multitude of issues have concerned the people of Pakistan, there are six that have dominated public discussion of domestic and foreign policies. They are as follows:

- The attempt to define an Islamic state in modern constitutional and legal forms that would reflect the principles and teachings of Islam, while accepting modern notions of nation-state, democracy, constitutionalism, and civil and political rights;
- The commitment to democratic processes through constitutional rule, political parties, and electoral procedures;
- The rise of military authoritarianism and its impact on the political process;
- The implementation of social legislation in the context of Islamic precepts, with particular attention to education and the status of women;
- The attempts to expand foreign policy options by assigning importance to relations with China, the United States, and other Muslim countries, including the question of how to cope with the security pressures caused by troubled relations with India; and
- The shaping of an economic policy that would put Pakistan on a sound financial basis, promote economic development with social justice, and reduce dependence on external loans.

Selections relating to these themes will be found in the contexts of the political structures of the different periods outlined below because, for good or ill, almost all developments in Pakistan have been dominated by politics. Selections in all periods illustrate the dilemmas, frustrations, and responses to problems that have characterized Pakistan's society as its leaders have tried to create a framework to accommodate its inheritances from the past and the demands of the present. The periods, and their characteristic political structure, are as follows:

- 1947–1957: Parliamentary democracy and Islamic identity
- 1958–1971: The hegemony of the military

- 1972–1977: Civilian rule by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto: Democracy and Islamic socialism
- 1977–1988: Military rule by General Zia ul-Haq (1977–1985), civilianization of military rule (1985–1988), and the use of the state machinery to promote Islamic orthodoxy and militancy
- 1988–1999: Civilian rule under Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif
- 1999–2008: Military rule by General Pervez Musharraf (1999–2002) and civilianization of his military rule by restoration of the amended constitution and elections (2002–2008)
- 2008: General elections and restoration of civilian democratic rule.

While politics has absorbed the energies of the elites to an extraordinary extent, Pakistan continued to generate a lively poetic tradition and has embraced such artifacts of modernity as television, radio, and cinema, although they have suffered from government censorship and criticism from Islamic groups. The gradual expansion of private-sector media, especially television, from 2002 onward, has had a significant impact on politics and society, facilitating more open debates on contentious social, political, and economic issues.

BIRTH OF A NATION: LITERARY REFLECTIONS BY FAIZ AHMAD FAIZ

We begin this chapter with the writings of Pakistan's most famous poet, Faiz Ahmad Faiz (1911–1984), whose poetry refracts the problems of his time with an intense humanitarian passion. Many of the themes, successes, and challenges of Pakistan's history are adumbrated in his justly popular poems.

Faiz Ahmad Faiz was influenced, as were many Indian intellectuals of his generation, by Marxism; he was a member of the Progressive Writers Association, which included many of the best-known writers of the time. Marxism was a liberating force that enabled writers to cross both religious and political boundaries. Faiz studied and taught in Lahore, the political and intellectual capital of Punjab, so that when Partition came he was already a citizen of Pakistan, not a *muhajir*, or refugee, from the Indian side of the border. As editor of the *Pakistan Times* of Lahore, he was known for his radical opinions and involvement in social action, and in 1953 he was sentenced to four years in prison for alleged involvement in what was known as the Rawalpindi Conspiracy, a plot to overthrow the government. His prison experience is often reflected in his early poetry.

Much of his poetry is about human love, but it is all infused with a compassion for the poor and a hatred of political tyranny. It is also marked by that common theme of the Indo-Islamic poetic tradition: the pain of separation and the lack of fulfillment. In Faiz, as in other Pakistani writers, the pain of separation results both from the

remembered past and from the sense that the dream of Pakistan has not been fulfilled. The translations are by his friend V. G. Kiernan, also a man of the left.

Expressions of Faiz's social passion are present in all his writing, even in a love poem such as the one from which this excerpt is taken; in it he speaks of what he has learned from lost love.

THE RIVALS

What I lost in this love, what I learned . . .
 If I were to explain to anyone except you I would not be able to explain.
 I learned helplessness, I learned protection of the poor;
 I learned the meaning of despair and frustration, of suffering and pain,
 I learned to understand the afflictions of the downtrodden,
 I learned the meaning of chill sighs, of livid faces.

[Faiz Ahmed Faiz, *Poems by Faiz*, trans. V. G. Kiernan
 (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), 73.]

The following short poem, written in about 1943, before Independence, combines both human love and his dream of a Pakistan free from foreign rule and indigenous tyranny.

A FEW DAYS MORE, MY DEAR!

A few days more, my dear, only a few days.
 We are compelled to draw breath in the shadows of tyranny;
 For a while longer let us bear oppression, and quiver, and weep:
 It is our ancestors' legacy. We are blameless;
 On our body is the fetter, on our feelings are chains,
 Our thoughts are captive, our speech is censored;
 It is our courage that even so we go on living.
 Is life some beggar's dress, on which
 Every hour patches of pain are fixed?
 But now the days of tyranny are few;
 Be patient for a moment, for the days of complaining are few.

[Faiz Ahmed Faiz, *Poems by Faiz*, 78.]

"Dawn of Freedom" is one of Faiz's most famous poems; it expresses the disillusionment he and many felt as they began to realize that the Pakistan they had hoped for was not the one that they had achieved.

DAWN OF FREEDOM (AUGUST 1947)

This stain-covered daybreak, this night-bitten dawn,
 This is not that dawn of which there was expectation;
 This is not that dawn with longing for which
 The friends set out, (convinced) that somewhere there would be met with,
 In the desert of the sky, the final destination of the stars,
 Somewhere there would be the shore of the sluggish wave of night,
 Somewhere would go and halt the boat of the grief of pain.
 By the mysterious highroads of youthful blood.

When friends set out, how many hands were laid on our skirts;
 From impatient sleeping-chambers of the dwellings of beauty
 Arms kept crying out, bodies kept calling;
 But very dear was the passion for the face of dawn,
 Very close the robe of the sylphs of light:
 The longing was very buoyant, the weariness was very slight.
 —It is heard that the separation of darkness and light has been fully
 completed,
 It is heard that the union of goal and step has been fully completed;
 The manners of the people of suffering (leaders) have changed very much,
 Joy of union is lawful, anguish for separation forbidden.
 The fire of the liver, the tumult of the eye, burning of the heart,

 —There is no effect on any of them of (this) cure for separation.
 Whence came that morning breeze, where has it gone?
 The lamp beside the road has still no knowledge of it;
 In the heaviness of night there has still come no lessening,
 The hour of the deliverance of eye and heart has not arrived.
 Come, come on, for that goal has still not arrived.

[Faiz Ahmed Faiz, *Poems by Faiz*, 123.]

In the next brief poem, Faiz asserts the poet's social responsibility.

TABLET AND PEN

I will go on cherishing the tablet and the pen,
 I will go on writing down what passes over the heart,
 I will go on collecting the attributes of the grief of love,
 I will go on pouring bounty on the desolation of the age.
 Yes, the bitterness of the times will grow still greater;
 Yes, the tyrants will go on practicing tyranny;

This bitterness is accepted, this tyranny is endurable to me,
While there is breath I will go on with the healing of pain.

[Faiz Ahmed Faiz, *Poems by Faiz*, 129.]

Memories of Faiz's experiences in prison permeated his early poetry.

DAYBREAK IN PRISON

Memories of prison, with the familiar theme of separation.
In the prison yard the golden faces of comrades,
Shining out from the surface of darkness grew little by little;
The dew of sleep had washed away from these faces
Grief for country, pain of separation from the face of the beloved.

[Faiz Ahmed Faiz, *Poems by Faiz*, 195.]

1947–1958: PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY AND ISLAMIC IDENTITY

Pakistan's first Constituent Assembly was established by dividing up the membership of the Constituent Assembly of British India that had been indirectly elected in July 1946. The members from the areas that constituted Pakistan were made members of Pakistan's Constituent Assembly, including several Hindus of the Congress Party from East Pakistan. Some new members were later added. It was to this body, with Jinnah as governor-general, that power was transferred by the British on August 15, 1947. It was both a constitution-making body and a federal legislature.

At the time of Independence, Pakistan faced the task of setting up a central government at Karachi, its first capital. This was not easy: the administration of the provinces that joined Pakistan had hitherto been linked with the central government in Delhi, and hence required reorientation. A new provincial government was established in Dhaka for East Bengal, hitherto administered from Calcutta as part of Bengal. There were serious shortages of experienced civil servants and military officers. Pakistan retained British civil servants and military officers for a longer time than did India.

Although most members of the Constituent Assembly agreed that Islam should hold a place of special importance in Pakistan, there was little agreement on Islam's operational relationship with the state, or about the kind of political institutions and processes that should be established. Some held that the principles of Islam should be applied in strict accordance with the Sharia, the traditional basis of Islamic law. A large number of Islamic scholars and parties held this view, and wanted Pakistan to become a strict and conservative Islamic

state. Others argued for a blending of democracy with the teachings of Islam, rather than a rigid enforcement of classical Islamic laws and traditions. They talked of the need for flexibility, so as to be able to adjust to the needs of contemporary society. This group included many of the best-known leaders in Pakistan, such as Jinnah, the governor-general, and Liaquat Ali Khan, the first prime minister.

In the first decade of independence, a number of factors hindered the political development of the new state and delayed constitution-making. The first major issue that distorted Pakistani politics was its troubled relations with India—especially, the invasion by Pakistani armed groups of Jammu and Kashmir in September–October 1947. Jammu and Kashmir was a very large princely state, contiguous with Pakistan, and it had a notoriously discriminatory Hindu ruler, Maharaja Hari Singh, who reigned over a Muslim-majority population. Singh did not initially join either India or Pakistan. Under pressure from invading tribesmen and other armed groups from Pakistan, however, he opted to join India, whose troops landed in Srinagar, the capital city, and quickly contained the incursions. Singh's decision to join India was legal, but it defied the logic of Partition, which called for boundaries based on religion. A war broke out between India and Pakistan in 1948; it was brought to an end through a ceasefire brokered by the United Nations Security Council in January 1949. Under the ceasefire terms, the territory captured by Pakistani irregulars and the army stayed with Pakistan. It was named Azad Kashmir by Pakistan. Bilateral talks between India and Pakistan, and diplomatic efforts by the United Nations Security Council, could not resolve the Kashmir problem, which has continued to be a dangerously inflammable area of tension up to the present.

A second major factor undermining the stability of the new state was the crisis of leadership after the deaths of Jinnah (September 1948) and Liaquat Ali Khan (October 1951). The leaders who succeeded Jinnah in the early years lacked his stature, and were unable effectively to promote unity and harmony. With the death of Liaquat Ali Khan, the rise to power of local and regional leaders fragmented national politics.

Third, the Muslim League, the party of independence, failed to transform itself from a nationalist movement to a nationwide political party that inspired confidence among the people. Organizationally weak and internally divided, the Muslim League lost momentum, and a host of other parties appeared that could not provide effective direction because they suffered from the same weak leadership and provincial vision that afflicted the Muslim League.

Fourth, political polarization and conflict intensified as the political leaders from East Pakistan demanded greater provincial autonomy, and wanted Bengali to be recognized as one of the national languages. This demand for provincial autonomy was pressed by leaders from Sindh and NWFP as well. Language riots broke out in East Pakistan in February 1952, and various opposition political

parties joined together as the "United Front" and defeated the Muslim League in the East Pakistan Provincial Assembly elections in 1954. In 1954 the Constituent Assembly recognized Bengali and Urdu as the national languages of Pakistan.

Fifth, the Punjab witnessed violent riots in 1953 against the Ahmadiyya community, a cohesive, modernist sect regarded as heretical by many orthodox Muslims. They are also known as Qadiyanis, since they trace their origin to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835–1908) of Qadian in the Indian Punjab. The situation worsened to such an extent that for the first time in the country's short history, martial law was imposed in 1953 to protect civilians in Lahore and some other cities of the Punjab.

The first attempt to dismantle the democratic process was made by Ghulam Muhammad, who had assumed the office of governor-general in 1951. In strengthening his position, he exploited conflicts among political leaders, and removed and installed prime ministers at will. Aware that the Constituent Assembly was attempting to strip him of his extraordinary powers by finalizing a draft constitution for the country, on October 24, 1954, Ghulam Muhammad dissolved the Constituent Assembly and removed Prime Minister Mohammad Ali Bogra. No political party resisted the governor-general's action.

Allen McGrath quotes the governor-general's proclamation in his book *The Destruction of Pakistan's Democracy*: "The Governor-General, having considered the political crisis with which the country is faced, has with deep regret come to the conclusion that the constitutional machinery has broken down. He therefore has decided to declare a state of emergency throughout Pakistan. The Constituent Assembly at present has lost the confidence of the people and can no longer function. The ultimate authority vests in the people who will decide all issues, including constitutional issues, through their representatives who are to be elected; fresh elections will be held as early as possible."⁵

He reappointed Bogra as prime minister and nominated members of his cabinet. The army chief, General Ayub Khan, was appointed defense minister, while retaining the command of the armed forces. This endorsement by the army of Ghulam Muhammad's authoritarian governance and dissolution of the Constituent Assembly was a clear manifestation of the army's growing clout in politics.

A new Constituent Assembly was indirectly elected by the provincial assemblies in June–July 1955; in early 1956 it successfully framed a constitution. This 1956 Constitution, which came into effect on March 23, 1956, designated Pakistan as an Islamic Republic with a parliamentary system of government, a directly elected national assembly with universal adult franchise, and a guarantee of fundamental rights. It provided that "sovereignty over the entire universe belongs to God Almighty alone." It also stated that no law would be enacted that violated the teachings and principles of Islam. These provisions were also included in the later constitutions, those of 1962 and 1973.

The introduction of the Constitution neither changed policy nor improved politics. Divided political leaders and weak political parties under pressure from ethnic, regional, and religious activists could not provide coherent and stable governance.

Pakistan's troubled democratic and constitutional rule came to an end on October 7, 1958, when President Iskander Mirza abrogated the 1956 Constitution, imposed martial law, and appointed the army chief, General Ayub Khan, as the "Chief Martial Law Administrator." We return to these events later in the chapter.

VISIONS OF PAKISTAN

The following four excerpts show divergent visions of Pakistan, and especially of its relationship with Islam. These perspectives are still part of the political discourse in Pakistan in the twenty-first century.

MUHAMMAD ALI JINNAH: THE VISION OF SECULAR PAKISTAN

The following statement is from a speech Jinnah made on August 11, 1947, to the Constituent Assembly. With its strong and clear insistence that Pakistan would be a modern, democratic state that guaranteed equal freedom for all religions, it provides a striking prologue to the long debate on the place of Islam. As a true liberal who believed that by having regional autonomy Muslims could escape the iron box of permanent minority status and hence enjoy the privileges of rights-bearing individuals, Jinnah averred that in Pakistan the role of Islam would be no different from that of other religions. He expressed essentially the same idea in the following year, when he told a gathering of bureaucrats that the Constitution must be based on the fundamental principles of democracy—not bureaucracy or autocracy or dictatorship.⁶ Jinnah died in September 1948, before he had an opportunity to give constitutional form to his ideas.

I cordially thank you, with the utmost sincerity, for the honour you have conferred upon me—the greatest honour that is possible for this Sovereign Assembly to confer—by electing me as your first President. I also thank those leaders who have spoken in appreciation of my services and their personal references to me. I sincerely hope that with your support and your co-operation we shall make this Constituent Assembly an example to the world. The Constituent Assembly has got two main functions to perform. The first is the very onerous and responsible task of framing our future Constitution of Pakistan and the second of functioning as a full and complete Sovereign body as the Federal Legislature of Pakistan. We have to do the best we can in adopting a provisional constitution for the Federal Legislature of Pakistan. You know really that not only we ourselves are wondering but, I think, the whole world is wondering at this unprecedented

cyclonic revolution which has brought about the plan of creating and establishing two independent Sovereign Dominions in this sub-continent. As it is, it has been unprecedented; there is no parallel in the history of the world. This mighty sub-continent with all kinds of inhabitants has been brought under a plan which is titanic, unknown, unparalleled. And what is very important with regard to it is that we have achieved it peacefully and by means of an evolution of the greatest possible character.

Dealing with our first function in this Assembly, I cannot make any well-considered pronouncement at this moment, but I shall say a few things as they occur to me. The first—and the foremost thing that I would like to emphasize is this—remember that you are now a Sovereign Legislative body and you have got all the powers. It, therefore, places on you the gravest responsibility as to how you should take your decisions. The first observation that I would like to make is this: You will no doubt agree with me that the first duty of a Government is to maintain law and order, so that the life, property and religious beliefs of its subjects are fully protected by the State. . . .

I know there are people who do not quite agree with the division of India and the partition of the Punjab and Bengal. Much has been said against it, but now that it has been accepted, it is the duty of every one of us to loyally abide by it and honourably act according to the agreement which is now final and binding on all. But you must remember, as I have said, that this mighty revolution that has taken place is unprecedented. One can quite understand the feeling that exists between the two communities wherever one community is in majority and the other is in minority. But the question is, whether it was possible or practicable to act otherwise than what has been done. A division had to take place. On both sides, in Hindustan and Pakistan, there are sections of people who may not agree with it, who may not like it, but in my judgment there was no other solution and I am sure future history will record its verdict in favor of it. And what is more it will be proved by actual experience as we go on that that was the only solution of India's constitutional problem. Any idea of a United India could never have worked and in my judgment it would have led us to terrific disaster. May be that view is correct; may be it is not; that remains to be seen. All the same, in this division it was impossible to avoid the question of minorities being in one Dominion or the other. Now that was unavoidable. There is no other solution. Now what shall we do? Now, if we want to make this great State of Pakistan happy and prosperous we should wholly and solely concentrate on the well-being of the people, and especially of the masses and the poor. If you will work in co-operation, forgetting the past, burying the hatchet you are bound to succeed. If you change your past and work together in a spirit that every one of you, no matter to what community he belongs, no matter what relations he had with you in the past, no matter what is his color, caste or creed, is first, second, and last a citizen of this State with equal rights, privileges and obligations, there will be no end to the progress you will make.

I cannot emphasize it too much. We should begin to work in that spirit and in course of time all these angularities of the majority and minority communities, the Hindu community and the Muslim community—because even as regards Muslims you have Pathans, Punjabis, Shias, Sunnis and so on and among the Hindus you have Brahmans, Vaishnavas, Khattris, also Bengalees, Madrasis, and so on will vanish. Indeed if you ask me this has been the biggest hindrance in the way of India to attain the freedom and independence and but for this we would have been free peoples long ago. No power can hold another nation, and specially a nation of 400 million souls in subjection; nobody could have conquered you, and even if it had happened, nobody could have continued its hold on you for any length of time but for this. Therefore, we must learn a lesson from this. You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other places of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed—that has nothing to do with the business of the State. As you know, history shows that in England conditions, some time ago, were much worse than those prevailing in India today. The Roman Catholics and the Protestants persecuted each other. Even now there are some States in existence where there are discriminations made and bars imposed against a particular class. Thank God, we are not starting in those days. We are starting in the days when there is no discrimination, no distinction between one community and another, no discrimination between one caste or creed and another. We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State. The people of England in course of time had to face the realities of the situation and had to discharge the responsibilities and burdens placed upon them by the government of their country and they went through that fire step by step. Today, you might say with justice that Roman Catholics and Protestants do not exist; what exists now is that every man is a citizen, an equal citizen of Great Britain and they are all members of the Nation.

Now, I think we should keep that in front of us as our ideal and you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State.

Well, gentlemen, I do not wish to take up any more of your time and thank you again for the honour you have done to me. I shall always be guided by the principles of justice and fair-play without any, as is put in the political language, prejudice or ill-will, in other words, partiality or favouritism. My guiding principle will be justice and complete impartiality, and I am sure that with your support and co-operation, I can look forward to Pakistan becoming one of the greatest Nations of the world.

[Excerpts from Muhammad Ali Jinnah, *Speeches as Governor-General of Pakistan, 1947–48* (Karachi: Pakistan Publications, n.d.), 6–9.]

LIAQUAT ALI KHAN: THE OBJECTIVES RESOLUTION

On the death of Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan (1895–1951) continued as prime minister but became the effective head of the government, although the office of president was held by Khwaja Nazimuddin of East Pakistan. A representative of the wealthy, Westernized, liberal group, Liaquat seemed to share Jinnah's vision of Pakistan as a modern nation-state with democratic political institutions, but he laid much more stress on religion as a belief system than did Jinnah. Liaquat took a formal step toward making a constitution when he moved the Objectives Resolution in March 1949.

In subsequent months, the constitutional debates revealed the deep divisions that existed in the country. The leaders of the Islamic parties wanted a stronger assertion that Pakistan was an Islamic state, with priority given to Islamic law. The representatives of East Bengal, in language that foreshadowed the later secessionist movement, argued for more autonomy for the two wings of the country, East Pakistan and West Pakistan. Liaquat was assassinated in 1951; because no one knew who was responsible, there was widespread suspicion against many groups and individuals.

The following selection is what is known as the Objectives Resolution, which was proposed by Liaquat on March 7, 1949, and adopted by the Constituent Assembly that month. Although Liaquat stressed the democratic ideals of the Objectives Resolution, it should be noted that the constitution was not to be neutral toward all religions: Islam was to be the guiding, principal force in Pakistan's political life, however this might be organized. Despite many constitutional changes through the years, there has been no essential deviation from the general direction marked out in the Objectives Resolution.

I beg to move the following Objectives Resolution embodying the main principles on which the constitution of Pakistan is to be based:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful;

WHEREAS sovereignty over the entire universe belongs to God Almighty alone and the authority which He has delegated to the State of Pakistan through its people for being exercised within the limits prescribed by Him is a sacred trust;

This Constituent Assembly representing the people of Pakistan resolves to frame a constitution for the sovereign independent State of Pakistan;

WHEREIN the State shall exercise its powers and authority through the chosen representatives of the people;

WHEREIN the principles of democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance, and social justice, as enunciated by Islam, shall be fully observed;

WHEREIN the Muslims shall be enabled to order their lives in the individual and collective spheres in accord with the teachings and requirements of Islam as set out in the Holy Quran and the Sunnah;⁷

WHEREIN adequate provision shall be made for the minorities freely to profess and practice their religions and develop their cultures;

WHEREBY the territories now included in or in accession with Pakistan and such other territories as may hereafter be included in or accede to Pakistan shall form a Federation wherein the units will be autonomous with such boundaries and limitations on their powers and authority as may be prescribed;

WHEREIN shall be guaranteed fundamental rights including equality of status, of opportunity, and before law, social, economic, and political justice and freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship and association, subject to law and public morality;

WHEREIN adequate provision shall be made to safeguard the legitimate interests of minorities and backward and depressed classes;

WHEREIN the independence of the judiciary shall be fully secured;

WHEREIN the integrity of the territories of the Federation, its independence and all its rights including its sovereign rights on land, sea and air shall be safeguarded;

So that the people of Pakistan may prosper and attain their rightful and honored place amongst the nations of the world and make their full contribution towards international peace and progress and happiness of humanity.

I consider this to be a most important occasion in the life of this country, next in importance only to the achievement of independence, because by achieving independence we only won an opportunity of building up a country and its polity in accordance with our ideals. . . . Pakistan was founded because the Muslims of this subcontinent wanted to build up their lives in accordance with the teachings and traditions of Islam, because they wanted to demonstrate to the world that Islam provides a panacea to the many diseases which have crept into the life of humanity today. . . . We, as Pakistanis, are not ashamed of the fact that we are overwhelmingly Muslims and we believe that it is by adhering to our faith and ideals that we can make a genuine contribution to the welfare of the world. Therefore, Sir, you would notice that the Preamble of the Resolution deals with a frank and unequivocal recognition of the fact that all authority must be subservient to God. It is quite true that this is in direct contradiction to the Machiavellian ideas regarding a polity where spiritual and ethical values should play no part in the governance of the people and, therefore, it is also perhaps a little out of fashion to remind ourselves of the fact that the State should be an instrument of beneficence and not of evil. But we, the people of Pakistan, have the courage to believe firmly that all authority should be exercised in accordance with the standards laid down by Islam so that it may not be misused. All authority is a sacred trust, entrusted to us by God for the purpose of being exercised in the service of man, so that it does not become an agency for tyranny or selfishness. . . . Islam does not recognize either priesthood or any sacerdotal authority; and, therefore, the question of a theocracy simply does not arise in Islam. If there are any who still use the word theocracy in the same

breath as the polity of Pakistan, they are either laboring under a grave misapprehension, or indulging in mischievous propaganda.

You would notice that the Objectives Resolution lays emphasis on the principles of democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance, and social justice, and further defines them by saying that these principles should be observed in the constitution as they have been enunciated by Islam. It has been necessary to qualify these terms because they are generally used in a loose sense. For instance, the Western Powers and Soviet Russia alike claim that their systems are based upon democracy, and, yet, it is common knowledge that their polities are inherently different. . . . When we use the word democracy in the Islamic sense, it pervades all aspects of our life; it relates to our system of government and to our society with equal validity, because one of the greatest contributions of Islam has been the idea of the equality of all men. Islam recognizes no distinctions based upon race, color, or birth. Even in the days of its decadence, Islamic society has been remarkably free from the prejudices which vitiated human relations in many other parts of the world. . . . Similarly, we have a great record in tolerance, for under no system of government, even in the Middle Ages, have the minorities received, the same consideration and freedom as they did in Muslim countries.

[From *The Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates*, 1st to 16th sessions
(Karachi: Government of Pakistan Press, 1947–54), 5(1): 1–7.

THE MUNIR REPORT: CAN THERE BE AN ISLAMIC STATE?

The government set up a commission in 1953, under the chairmanship of Justice Munir of the Punjab Supreme Court, to inquire into the causes of the anti-Ahmadiyya riots; the result was what became known as the Munir Report, which had important implications that went beyond that specific brief. It attempted to answer two fundamental questions: What is the nature of an Islamic state? And who is a Muslim? The report criticized the elected politicians for not having taken timely action against rioters, and pressed the religious leaders and the politicians to define what they meant by an “Islamic state.” The report’s conclusion—that such a state is impossible in the modern world—was rejected, of course, by orthodox groups, but it is important for emphasizing the problems inherent in having a religious ideology dominant in a modern state.

It has been repeatedly said before us that implicit in the demand for Pakistan was the demand for an Islamic State. Some speeches of important leaders who were striving for Pakistan undoubtedly lend themselves to this construction. These leaders while referring to an Islamic State or to a State governed by Islamic laws perhaps had in their minds the pattern of a legal structure based on or mixed up with Islamic dogma, personal law, ethics and institutions. No one who has given serious thought to the introduction of a religious State in Paki-

stan has failed to notice the tremendous difficulties with which any such scheme must be confronted. . . . The Quaid-i-Azam [M. A. Jinnah] said that the new State would be a modern democratic State, with sovereignty resting in the people and the members of the new nation having equal rights of citizenship regardless of their religion, caste or creed. . . .

The Quaid-i-Azam was the founder of Pakistan and the occasion on which he thus spoke was the first landmark in the history of Pakistan. The speech was intended both for his own people, including non-Muslims, and the world, and its object was to define as clearly as possible the ideal to the attainment of which the new State was to devote all its energies. There are repeated references in this speech to the bitterness of the past and an appeal to forget and change the past and to bury the hatchet. The future subject of the State is to be a citizen with equal rights, privileges and obligations, irrespective of colour, caste, creed or community. . . .

We asked the *ulama* whether this conception of a State was acceptable to them and every one of them replied in an unhesitating negative. . . . If Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi's⁸ evidence correctly represents the view of Jamaat-i-Islami, a State based on [Jinnah's] idea is the creature of the devil, and he is confirmed in this by several writings of his chief, Maulana Abul Ala Maudoodi, the founder of the jamāat. None of the *ulama* can tolerate a State which is based on nationalism and all that it implies: with them *millat* [religious community or nation] and all that it connotes can alone be the determining factor in State activity.

What is then the Islamic State of which everybody talks but nobody thinks? Before we seek to discover an answer to this question, we must have a clear conception of the scope and function of the State.

The *ulama* were divided in their opinions when they were asked to cite some precedent of an Islamic State in Muslim history. . . . Most of them, however, relied on the form of Government during the Islamic Republic from 632 to 661 A.D., a period of less than thirty years. . . .

Since the basis of Islamic law is the principle of inerrancy of revelation and of the Holy Prophet, the law to be found in the *Quran* and the *sunna* is above all man-made laws, and in case of conflict between the two, the latest, irrespective of its nature, must yield to the former. Thus, provided there be a rule in the *Quran* or the *sunna* on a matter which according to our conceptions falls within the region of Constitutional Law or International Law, the rule must be given effect to unless that rule itself permits a departure from it. . . .

The Objectives Resolution rightly recognised this position when it recited that all sovereignty rests with God Almighty alone. But the authors of that Resolution misused the words "sovereign" and "democracy" when they recited that the Constitution to be framed was for a sovereign State in which principles of democracy as enunciated by Islam shall be fully observed. . . . When it is said that a country is sovereign, the implication is that its people or any other group

of persons in it are entitled to conduct the affairs of that country in any way they like and untrammelled by any considerations except those of expediency and policy. An Islamic State, however, cannot in this sense be sovereign, because it will not be competent to abrogate, repeal or do away with any law in the Quran or the *sunna*. Absolute restriction on the legislative power of a State is a restriction on the sovereignty of the people of that State and if the origin of this restriction lies elsewhere than in the will of the people, then to the extent of that restriction the sovereignty of the State and its people is necessarily taken away. . . . If the power of the people in the framing of the Constitution or in the framing of the laws or in the sphere of executive action is subject to certain immutable rules, it cannot be said that they can pass any law that they like, or, in the exercise of executive functions, do whatever they like. Indeed if the legislature in an Islamic State is a sort of *ijmāʿ* [consensus of Islamic scholars], the masses are expressly disqualified from taking part in it because *ijmāʿ-i-ummat* in Islamic jurisprudence is restricted to *ulama* and *mujahids* of acknowledged status and does not at all extend, as in democracy, to the populace.

Pakistan is being taken by the common man to be an Islamic State, though it is not. This belief has been encouraged by the ceaseless clamour for Islam and Islamic State that is being heard from all quarters since the establishment of Pakistan. The phantom of an Islamic State has haunted the Musalman throughout the ages and is a result of the memory of the glorious past when Islam, rising like a storm from the least expected quarter of the world—[the] wilds of Arabia—instantly enveloped the world, pulling down from their high pedestal gods who had ruled over man since the creation, uprooting centuries-old institutions and superstitions and supplanting all civilisations that had been built on an enslaved humanity. What is 125 years in human history, nay in the history of a people, and yet during this brief period Islam spread from the Indus to the Atlantic and Spain, and from the borders of China to Egypt, and the sons of the desert installed themselves in all old centres of civilisation—in Ctesiphon, Damascus, Alexandria, India and all places associated with the names of the Sumerian and the Assyrian civilisations. . . .

It is this brilliant achievement of the Arabian nomads, the like of which the world had never seen before, that makes the Musalman of today live in the past and yearn for the return of the glory that was Islam. He finds himself standing on the crossroads, wrapped in the mantle of the past and with the dead weight of centuries on his back, frustrated and bewildered and hesitant to turn one corner or the other. The freshness and the simplicity of the faith, which gave determination to his mind and spring to his muscle, is now denied to him. He has neither the means nor the ability to conquer and there are no countries to conquer. Little does he understand that the forces, which are pitted against him, are entirely different from those against which early Islam had to fight, and that on the clues given by his own ancestors [the] human mind has achieved results which he cannot understand. He therefore finds himself in a state of helplessness, waiting for

some one to come and help him out of this morass of uncertainty and confusion. And he will go on waiting like this without anything happening. Nothing but a bold re-orientation of Islam to separate the vital from the lifeless can preserve it as a World Idea and convert the Musalman into a citizen of the present and the future world from the archaic incongruity that he is today.

It is this lack of bold and clear thinking, the inability to understand and take decisions which has brought about in Pakistan a confusion which will persist and repeatedly create situations of the kind we have been inquiring into until our leaders have a clear conception of the goal and of the means to reach it. . . . The sublime faith called Islam will live even if our leaders are not there to enforce it. It lives in the individual, in his soul and outlook, in all his relations with God and men, from the cradle to the grave, and our politicians should understand that if Divine commands cannot make or keep a man a Musalman, their statutes will not.

[From *Report of the Court of Inquiry Constituted Under Punjab Act II to Inquire Into the Punjab Disturbances of 1953* (Lahore: Government Printing Press, 1954), 201, 203, 210, 231–232.]

SAYYID ABUL ALA MAUDUDI: THE ISLAMIST VISION OF AN ISLAMIC SYSTEM

Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi (1903–1979) [also spelled Maudoodi], founder in India of the influential organization Jamaat-e Islami (Islamic Association), was the most vigorous and persuasive spokesman for the campaign to make Pakistan into an Islamic state. He made his reputation in India with the journal he started in 1933, *Tarjumān ul-Qurān* (*Exegesis of the Quran*), which deeply influenced Muslim thought in India after Partition. He first opposed the pre-Independence separatist movement for Pakistan on the grounds that nationalism was based on Western, not Islamic, values. He went to Pakistan after Partition, however, where his organization, the Jamaat-e Islami, campaigned for an Islamic constitution. He gained wide support among college students and government and factory workers, particularly after 1979, when his message of jihadist Islam dovetailed with American and Saudi support for the resistance against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. His ideas also permeate later attempts, including those by General Zia, to make Pakistan a genuine Islamic state.

SPEECH AT LAW COLLEGE, LAHORE

JANUARY 6, 1948

[ISLAM AND THE IMPACT OF THE WEST]

Commencing with stagnation in the domains of knowledge and learning, research and discovery, and thought and culture, [the degeneration of the Muslims] finally culminated in our political breakdown, making many a Muslim

country the slave of non-Muslim imperialist powers. Political slavery gave birth to an inferiority complex and the resultant intellectual serfdom, which eventually swept the entire Muslim world off its feet, so much so that even those Muslim countries which were able to retain their political freedom could not escape its evil influences. The ultimate consequence of this evil situation was that when Muslims woke up again to the call of progress, they were incapable of looking at things except through the colored glasses of Western thought. Nothing which was not Western could inspire confidence in them. Indeed, the adoption of Western culture and civilization and aping the West even in the most personal things became their craze. Eventually, they succumbed totally to the slavery of the West.

This trend towards Westernism was also the result of the disappointment which came from the side of the Muslim religious leaders. Being themselves the victims of the widespread degeneration that had engulfed the entire Muslim world, they were incapable of initiating any constructive movement or taking any revolutionary step which could combat the evils afflicting Muslim society. Quite naturally, this disappointment turned the discontented Muslims towards that system of life which had the glamour of being successful in the modern world. Thus they adopted modern thought and the new culture of the West and blindly aped Western morals and manners. Slowly but surely the religious leaders were pushed into the background and were replaced, as regards power and control over the people, by men bereft of all knowledge of their religion and imbued only with the spirit of modern thought and Western ideals. That is why we find that many a Muslim country has, in the recent past, either completely abrogated the Islamic law or confined its operation to the domain of purely personal matters—a position conferred on the non-Muslims in a truly Islamic state.

In all Muslim countries suffering from foreign domination, the leadership of political and cultural movements fell into the hands of those who were shorn of all Islamic background. They adopted the creed of "Nationalism," directed their efforts towards the cause of *national* independence and prosperity along secular lines, and tried to copy step by step the advanced nations of our age. So, if these gentlemen are vexed with the demand for Islamic constitution and Islamic laws, it is just natural for them. It is also natural for them to sidetrack or suppress the issue, as they are ignorant even of the A. B. C. of the Islamic *Sharī'ah*. Their education and intellectual development has alienated them so completely from the spirit and the structure of Islamic ideology that it is at least for the moment impossible for them to understand such demands.

As regards the Muslim religious leadership, it fares in no way better, because our religious institutions are tied up to the intellectual atmosphere of eight centuries ago, as a consequence of which they have not been able to produce such leaders of Islamic thought and action as could be capable of administering the affairs of a modern state in the light of Islamic principles. This is, indeed, a very

real obstacle facing the Islamic countries in their march towards the goal of Islamic revolution.

This is the situation obtaining throughout the Muslim world and impeding the path of the establishment of [an] Islamic constitution. The case of Pakistan is not, however, the same as that of other Muslim countries, certain similarities of situation notwithstanding. This is so because it has been achieved exclusively with the object of becoming the homeland of Islam. For the last ten years, we have been ceaselessly fighting for the recognition of the fact that we are a separate nation by virtue of our adherence to Islam. We have been proclaiming from house-tops that we have a distinct culture of our own, and that we possess a world view, an outlook on life, and a code of living fundamentally different from those of non-Muslims. We have all along been demanding a separate homeland for the purpose of translating into practice the ideals envisaged by Islam, and, at last, after a long and arduous struggle, in which we sustained a heavy loss of life and property and suffered deep humiliation in respect of the honor and chastity of a large number of our women-folk, we have succeeded in attaining our cherished goal—this country of Pakistan. If, now, after all these precious sacrifices, we fail to achieve the real and ultimate objective of making Islam a practical, constitutional reality which inspired us to fight for Pakistan, our entire struggle becomes futile and all our sacrifices meaningless.

Indeed, if a secular and Godless, instead of Islamic, constitution was to be introduced and if the British Criminal Procedure Code had to be enforced instead of the Islamic *Sharīah* what was the sense in all this struggle for a separate Muslim homeland? We could have had it without that. Similarly, if we simply intended to implement any socialist program, we could have achieved it in collaboration with the Communist and Socialist parties of India without plunging the nation into this great blood-bath and mighty ordeal.

The fact is that we are already committed before God and man and at the altar of History about the promulgation of [an] Islamic constitution and no going back on our words is possible. Whatever the hurdles and however great they are, we have to continue our march towards our goal of a full-fledged Islamic State in Pakistan.

[ISLAMIC LAW IS PART OF A TOTAL WAY OF LIFE]

Islam signifies the entire scheme of life and not any isolated part or parts thereof. Consequently, neither can it be appropriate to view the different parts of the *Sharīah*, Islamic Law, in isolation from one another and without regard to the whole, nor will it be of any use to take any particular part and bracket it with any other “ism.” The *Sharīah* can function smoothly and can demonstrate its efficacy only if the entire system of life is practised in accordance with it and not otherwise.

Many of the present-day misunderstandings about the *Shari'ah* owe themselves to this faulty attitude in judging its worth, namely, forming opinions about its different aspects separately. Some injunctions of it are isolated from the main body of Islamic Laws and then they are considered in the perspective of modern civilization, or they are viewed as if they were something completely self-contained. Thus, people take just one injunction of the *Shariah* at random, which becomes maimed after its removal from the context, and then view it in the context of some modern legal system, and criticize it on the score of its incongruity with present-day conceptions. But they fail to realise that it was never meant to be isolated like that for it forms an organic part of a distinct and self-contained system of life.

A few provisions of the Islamic Penal Code are, in particular, contemptuously jeered at. But those who do so do not realize that those provisions are to be viewed with the background of the whole Islamic system of life covering the economic, social, political and educational spheres of activity. If all these departments are not working, then those isolated provisions of our Penal Code can certainly work no miracles.

As we all know, Islam imposes the penalty of cutting off the hands for the commitment of theft. But this injunction is meant to be promulgated in a full-fledged Islamic State wherein the wealthy pay *Zakat* to the state and the state provides for the basic necessities of the needy and the destitute; wherein every township is enjoined to play host to visitors at its own expense for a minimum period of three days; wherein all citizens are provided with equal privileges and opportunities to seek economic livelihood; wherein monopolistic tendencies are discouraged; wherein people are God-fearing and seek His pleasure with devotion; wherein the virtues of generosity, helping the poor, treating the sick, providing the needy are in the air to the extent that even a small boy is made to realize that he is not a true Muslim if he allows his neighbour to sleep hungry while he has taken his meal. In other words, it is not meant for the present-day society where you cannot get a single penny without having to pay interest; where in place of *Baitul Mal* [charitable help] there are implacable money-lenders and banks which, instead of providing relief and succour to the poor and the needy, treat them with callous disregard, heartless refusal and brutal contempt: where the guiding motto is: "Everybody for himself and devil take the hindmost"; where there are great privileges for the privileged ones while others are deprived even of their legitimate rights; where the economic system, propelled by greed and piloted by exploitation, only leads to the enrichment of the few at the cost of crushing poverty and intolerable misery of the many, and where the political system serves only to prop up injustice, class-privileges and distressing economic disparities. Under such conditions, it is doubtful if theft should be penalised at all, not to speak of cutting off the thief's hands! For, in effect, to punish theft so severely would amount to protecting the wealth acquired illegitimately and unscrupulously by a few blood-suckers.

On the other hand, Islam aims at creating conditions under which none is compelled by the force of circumstances to steal. For, in the Islamic social order, apart from the voluntary help provided by individuals, the state guarantees the basic necessities of life to all. But, after providing all that, Islam enjoins a severe and exemplary punishment for those who commit theft, as their action shows that they are unfit to live in such a just, generous and healthy society and would cause greater harm to it, if left unchecked.

Similar is the case of the punishment for adultery and fornication. Islam prescribes a hundred stripes for the unmarried and stoning to death for the married partners in the crime. But, of course, it applies to a society wherein every trace of suggestiveness has been destroyed, where mixed gatherings of men and women have been prohibited, where public appearance of painted and pampered women is completely non-existent, where marriage has been made easy, where virtue, piety and charity are current coins and where the remembrance of God and the hereafter is kept ever fresh in men's minds and hearts. These punishments are not meant for that filthy society wherein sexual excitement is rampant, wherein nude pictures, obscene books and vulgar songs have become common recreations; wherein sexual perversions have taken hold of the cinema and all other places of amusement, wherein mixed, semi-nude parties are considered the acme of social progress and wherein economic conditions and social customs have made marriage extremely difficult.

We have now arrived at a stage where it is fairly clear that what we term as Islamic Law in the technical sense is only a part of a complete scheme of life and does not have any independent existence in isolation from that scheme. It can neither be understood nor enforced separately. To enforce it separately would, in fact, be against the intention of the Law-Giver. What is required of us is to translate into practice the entire Islamic programme of life and not merely a fragment of it. Then and then alone can the legal aspects be properly implemented.

This scheme of the *Shari'ah* is, however, divided into many parts. There are aspects of it which do not need any external force for their enforcement; they are and can be enforced only by the ever-awake conscience kindled by his faith in a Muslim. There are other parts which are enforced by Islam's programme of education, training of man's character and the purification of his heart and his morals. To enforce certain other parts, Islam resorts to the use of the force of public opinion: the general will and pressure of the society. There are still other parts which have been sanctified by the traditions and the conventions of Muslim society. A very large part of the Islamic system of law, however, needs for its enforcement, in all its details, the coercive power and authority of the state. Political power is essential for protecting the Islamic system of life from deterioration and perversion, for the eradication of vice and the establishment of virtue and, finally, for the enforcement of all those laws that require the sanction of the state and the judiciary for their operation.

[ISLAMIC LAW AND SOCIAL CHANGE]

The first objection that is raised is that because the Islamic laws were framed thirteen centuries ago in the light of the requirements of a primitive society, they cannot be of any use for a modern state of our days.

I doubt very much whether people who take this stand are conversant even with the elementary knowledge of the Islamic law. In all probability, they have heard from somewhere that the fundamentals of the Islamic law were enunciated more than thirteen hundred years ago, and they have assumed that this law has remained static since then and has failed to respond to the requirements of changing conditions of human life. On this misconception they have further assumed that the Islamic law will be unsuited to the needs of the present-day society and will clog the wheels of progress. These critics fail to realize, however, that the laws propounded thirteen and a half centuries ago, did not remain in a vacuum; they formed part and parcel of the life of Muslim society and brought into being a state which was run in the light of these laws. This naturally provided an opportunity of evolution to Islamic law from the earliest days, as it had to be applied to day-to-day matters through the process of *Ta'wil*, *Qiyas*, *Ijtihad*, and *Istihsan*.⁹

Very soon after its inception, Islam began to hold sway over nearly half the civilized world stretching from the Pacific to the Atlantic and, during the following twelve hundred years, the Islamic Law continued to administer the affairs of all Muslim states. This process of the evolution of Islamic law, therefore, did not stop for a moment up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, because it had to meet the challenge of the ever-changing circumstances and face countless problems confronting different countries in different stages of history. Even in our Indo-Pakistan subcontinent, the Islamic civil and penal codes were in vogue up to the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Thus, it is only for the last one hundred years that the Islamic law remained inoperative and suffered stagnation. But, firstly, this period does not form a big gap and we can easily make up for the loss with some amount of strenuous effort; secondly, we possess full records of the development of our jurisprudence, century by century, and there can be absolutely no ground for frustration or despondency, and our path of legal progress is thus already illumined.

Once we have grasped the fundamental principles and the basic facts concerning the evolution of the Islamic system of law, we cannot remain in doubt that this law shall be as responsive to the urges of a progressive society in the present and the future as it has been in the past. Only those who suffer from ignorance can fall a prey to such nonsense, while those who have a grasp of Islam and the Islamic law are aware of its potentialities of progress, and those who possess even a cursory knowledge of the history of its development can never

suspect it of being an antiquated or stagnant system of life which cannot keep pace with the march of history.

[From Maudoodi, *Islamic Law and Constitution*
(Lahore: Herald Press, 1954), 14-17, 27-31, 38-39.]

SPEECH AT LAW COLLEGE, LAHORE

FEBRUARY 19, 1948

If we really wish to see our Islamic ideals translated into reality, we should not overlook the natural law that all stable changes in the collective life of a people come about gradually. The more sudden a change, the more short-lived it is. For a permanent change it is necessary that it should be free from extremist bias and unbalanced approach.

The best example of this gradual change is the revolution brought about by the Holy Prophet (peace be on him) in Arabia. One who is acquainted even superficially with the history of the Prophet's achievements knows that he did not enforce the entire body of Islamic laws with one stroke. Instead, the society was prepared gradually for their enforcement. The Prophet (peace be on him) uprooted the practices of the "Age of Ignorance" one by one and substituted for them new, moderate principles of human conduct. He started his efforts for reformation by inculcating belief in the fundamentals of Islam, viz., the unity of God, the Life Hereafter and the Institution of Prophethood and by inducing the people to live a life of righteousness and piety. Those who accepted this message were trained by him to believe in and practice the Islamic Way of Life. When this was achieved to a considerable degree, the Prophet went a step further and established an Islamic State in Medina with the sole object of making the social life of the country conform to the Islamic pattern. . . .

Coming to our own times and our own country, Pakistan, if we wish to promulgate Islamic Law here, it would mean nothing less than the demolition of the entire structure built by your British masters and the erection of a new one in its place. It is obvious that this cannot be achieved by just an official proclamation or a parliamentary bill, because it is a stupendous task and demands a good deal of hard and systematic work on the basis of an all-embracing program. For instance, we need a thorough reorientation of our educational system. At present, we find two kinds of educational institutions running simultaneously in our country, namely, the old, religious madrasahs and the modern, secular universities and colleges. None of them can produce people needed to run a modern Islamic State. The old-fashioned schools are steeped in conservatism to such an extent that they have lost all touch with the modern world. Their education has been disconnected from the practical problems of life and has thus become barren and lifeless. It cannot, therefore, produce people who might be able to serve, for instance, as judges and magistrates of a progressive modern

state. As for our modern, secular institutions, they produce people who are ignorant of even a rudimentary knowledge of Islam and its laws. Moreover, we can hardly find such persons among those whose mentality has not been affected by the poisonous content and the thoroughly materialistic bias of modern, secular education.

There is yet another difficulty. The Islamic law has not been in force for the last century or so. Consequently our legal code has become stagnant and has lagged behind the march of time, while our urgent need is to bring it abreast of the latest developments of the modern age. Obviously, this would require a considerable amount of hard work.

There is, however, an even bigger hurdle. Living as slaves of an alien power and deprived of the Islamic influence for a long time, the pattern of our moral, cultural, social, economic and political life has undergone a radical change, and is today far removed from Islamic ideals. Under such circumstances it cannot be fruitful, even if it were possible, to change the legal structure of the country all at once, because then the general pattern of life and the legal structure will be poles apart, and the legal change will have to suffer the fate of a sapling planted in an uncongenial soil and facing hostile weather. It is, therefore, inevitable that the required reform should be gradual and the changes in the laws should be effected in such a manner as to balance favorably the change in the moral, educational, social, cultural and political life of the nation.

[From Maudoodi, *Islamic Law and Constitution*, 48–49, 51–52.]

THE KASHMIR DISPUTE

The next readings provide a counterpoint to the Indian view of the Kashmir dispute, as given above in chapter 8. As in India, the first decade of Pakistan's history as an independent nation was affected at almost every level by the dispute over the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

PRIME MINISTER CHAUDHRI MUHAMMAD ALI: THE ORIGINS OF THE DISPUTE

The first interpretation presented below comes from Chaudhri Muhammad Ali (1905–1980), who was a high-ranking civil servant in the financial department of the government of India before 1947. He worked on the first Pakistan budget and other financial matters until he was appointed prime minister, holding the office in 1955–1956.

His discussion of the origins of the Kashmir dispute is less emotion-laden than most contemporary accounts of this extremely complicated and controversial issue.

The Muslim League's attitude to the question of Kashmir's accession was stated by the Quaid-i-Azam in a talk with a delegation of the Jammu and Kashmir

Muslim Conference workers in July, 1947. In the course of his talk he remarked: "I have already made it clear more than once that the Indian States are free to join either the Pakistan Constituent Assembly or the Hindustan Constituent Assembly or remain independent. I have no doubt that they, the Maharaja and the Kashmir Government, will give the closest attention and consideration to this matter and realise the interest not only of the ruler but also of his people." Actually he was convinced that a dispassionate consideration of the relevant facts of population and geography, the economic and cultural ties, and even the Maharaja's dynastic interest, would inevitably point toward accession with Pakistan.

During this time the Pakistan government had its hands full; it had to deal with the task of establishing a new administration, the ordeal in the Punjab, and the mass migration that was under way. The people of Pakistan felt the most lively sympathy with their brethren in Jammu and Kashmir. The tragedy being enacted there appeared as part of a vast conspiracy to overwhelm Pakistan at its birth. As hundreds of thousands of Muslim refugees from Jammu and Kashmir moved into the neighboring areas of Pakistan, a new and grave threat to Pakistan took shape. . . . The Pakistan army authorities were greatly concerned as soldiers, who had been on leave to their homes in Poonch, reported that Muslim villagers there were being attacked by [Kashmir] state troops. Vigorous protests to the Maharaja's government were made. But instead of putting its own house in order, the state government accused Pakistan of having deliberately cut off supplies of food, gas, and other essential commodities. There was no truth in these allegations. The movement and feeding of millions of refugees had put the utmost strain upon supplies and rail and road communications in the Punjab. If shortages occurred in the state, it was due to the wholly exceptional circumstances produced by the greatest migration in history. . . .

About this time, unknown to the Pakistan government, a storm was brewing in the tribal areas. News of atrocities committed by the Maharaja's government on the Muslims of Kashmir had reached tribal areas from refugees and ex-soldiers from Poonch, who had gone there to purchase arms. Massacre of Muslims in East Punjab had already inflamed the feelings of the tribesmen. Now they felt a call for jihad, or holy war, in Kashmir. On October 21, Liaquat Ali Khan told me in a state of unusual excitement that a tribal lashkar [army], some thousands strong, was on the way to Kashmir. I asked him if he had informed the Quaid-i-Azam and he said, not yet, he had just received the report. There was nothing the Pakistan government could do about it. An attempt to prevent the tribesmen from performing what they conceived to be a religious duty would have set the whole frontier ablaze. The Pakistan army was neither fully organized nor adequately equipped. . . .

I had a long discussion with [Nehru] and came away convinced that Nehru was resolved to hold Kashmir by force and had no intention of allowing the people of Kashmir the right to determine their future. My argument that a fair solution of the Kashmir dispute was the best guarantee of friendly relations between India and Pakistan, and was, therefore, in the best interests of both

countries, left him cold. He talked only in terms of power politics, and said again and again that in matters of state no sovereign independent power could be trusted. If Pakistan had to be, it must never have the strength to be a possible threat to India. I pointed out that Kashmir's accession to Pakistan could not pose a threat to India because of the mountainous barrier between Kashmir and India. On the other hand, India would, by occupying Kashmir, be commanding the heights of Pakistan and controlling its life-line of rivers flowing from Kashmir. I found no trace in him of those sentiments of attachment to Kashmir with which he is often credited by virtue of his family's origins in Kashmir. The fact that in a prolonged struggle over Kashmir its people would be the worst sufferers did not move him in the least.

On January 1, 1948, the Government of India appealed to the Security Council to ask Pakistan to prevent its personnel, civil and military, from participating or assisting in the invasion of Jammu and Kashmir, . . . to call upon other Pakistan nationals to desist from taking any part in the fighting in the state, and to deny to the invaders access to its territory, supplies, and other aid. The Government of India also stated that after the restoration of normal conditions the people of Kashmir would be free to decide their future by a plebiscite under international auspices.

Pakistan lodged a counter complaint setting forth the attempts made by India to destroy Pakistan; the genocide of Muslims in East Punjab, Delhi, and other places in India, the forcible occupation of Junagadh [a princely state in present-day Gujarat that had wished to accede to Pakistan but was occupied and claimed by India], and the action taken by India to secure the accession of Kashmir by fraud and violence. The Security Council was requested by Pakistan to bring about a just and fair settlement of these disputes. For Kashmir, the request was for cessation of fighting, the withdrawal of all outsiders whether belonging to India or Pakistan, the return of Kashmir refugees, the establishment of an impartial administration, and the holding of a plebiscite "to ascertain the free and unfettered will of the people of Jammu and Kashmir as to whether the State shall accede to Pakistan or to India."

[Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, *The Emergence of Pakistan*
(New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 287, 288–300.]

PRIME MINISTER LIAQUAT ALI KHAN:
THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM

Liaquat Ali Khan provides the official Pakistani narrative of how a section of the Muslims revolted against the ruler of Kashmir; Kashmiris, he maintains, were fighting not only for their freedom but also for their existence.

I am speaking to you tonight from my sick-bed. I wish to talk to you about Kashmir, because the affairs of Kashmir have reached a critical phase and have now

assumed international importance and because I know that Kashmir is uppermost in your mind as it is in mine.

In the exhilaration of self-styled gallantry and valour, some erstwhile sympathisers of the oppressed people of Kashmir seem to have forgotten the history of this beautiful land. Let us, therefore, briefly recall it for their benefit.

This piece of God's earth along with the human beings inhabiting its hills and valleys, was, under the infamous Amritsar Treaty, sold by the British to a Dogra chieftain for the paltry sum of Rs. 75,00,000. The present Maharaja inherits the people of Kashmir as though they were so much cattle.

During the past 100 years of Dogra rule, this highly gifted and most attractive race of Kashmiris has been dragged down to the lowest depths of misery. In recent years, they have made many attempts to fight for their freedom. Time and again they have been thwarted but time and again they have risen to defy tyranny.

The fight is not yet at an end. But I would like my listeners to know that today the people of Kashmir are fighting not only for their freedom but also for their very existence, for their misfortunes have, in recent months, taken on a darker shade. They have been caught in the meshes of a widespread plan of the extermination of Muslims. This plan has succeeded in Alwar, in Bharatpur, in Patiala, in Faridkot, and in Kapurthala. And all these you will note are States that have acceded to the Indian Union.

In the beginning of October, news of the bestial deeds perpetrated on the innocent people of Kashmir began to trickle through. In a short time, the trickle became a torrent. Burning villages could be seen from the Murree hills. Thousands of terror-stricken refugees poured into Pakistan.

It was at this stage that the people of Kashmir in sheer desperation turned on their oppressors. Kashmiris, and specially the inhabitants of Poonch, have many relatives in Hazara and in the West Punjab. Consequently feelings in certain parts of Pakistan rose very high and some people from the N.W.F.P. and the Tribal Areas, stirred by the atrocities in Kashmir, rushed to the aid of their brethren.

It is the oppressed, enslaved and entrapped people of Kashmir struggling for their freedom (and now for their lives) and their sympathisers, whom the Indian Government is helping to wipe out. The declared object of the Indian Government is to strengthen the Maharaja's hands. How blood-stained these hands are is quite well-known to the leaders of India, even though they may choose to forget this fact now. . . .

For the choice before [the Kashmiris] now is freedom or death. If the plans of their enemies succeed, they will be exterminated, as Muslims in various other parts of India have been exterminated. It is presumably after such extermination that the Indian Government proposed a referendum should be held. What use is a referendum after the voters have been driven away from their homes, or silenced in death? The world knows how we have consistently and

repeatedly tried to reach a better understanding with the Kashmir Government. The Kashmir Government has ignored or rejected all these approaches.

[Liaquat Ali Khan, "Freedom or Death: Choice Before Kashmiri Muslims."

Radio address on Nov. 4, 1947, in *Speeches and Statements of Quaid-i-Millat*

Liaquat Ali Khan, 1941-51, ed. M. Rafique Afzal (Lahore:

Research Society of Pakistan, University of the Punjab, 1967), 131-136.]

SIR MUHAMMAD ZAFRULLA KHAN: PAKISTAN'S REPLY TO INDIA'S COMPLAINT TO THE UNITED NATIONS

On January 1, 1948, India formally charged Pakistan with invading its territory in Jammu and Kashmir. The response, a firm denial of India's allegations, was given by Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, Pakistan's foreign minister. He argued that insofar as there was any truth in Indian charges of incursions from the Pakistan side, such sorties had been made by tribesmen maddened by the suffering imposed on their Muslim brothers and sisters by Indian troops. Pakistan, unlike India, was not claiming territory, he insisted; it was trying to defend Muslims caught in India.

The specific charges which the India Government have brought against Pakistan are:

(a) That the invaders are allowed transit across Pakistan territory; (b) That they are allowed to use Pakistan territory as a base of operations; (c) That they include Pakistan nationals; (d) That they draw much of their military equipment, transport and supplies (including petrol) from Pakistan; and (e) That Pakistan officers are training, guiding and otherwise helping them.

The Pakistan Government emphatically deny that they are giving aid and assistance to the so-called invaders or have committed any act of aggression against India. On the contrary and solely with the object of maintaining friendly relations between the two Dominions, the Pakistan Government have continued to do all in their power to discourage the tribal movement by all means short of war. This has caused bitter resentment throughout the country, but despite a very serious risk of large-scale internal disturbances the Pakistan Government have not deviated from this policy. . . . It may be that a certain number of independent tribesmen and persons from Pakistan are helping the Azad Kashmir Government in their struggle for liberty as volunteers, but it is wrong to say that Pakistan territory is being used as base of military operations. It is also incorrect that the Pakistan Government are supplying military equipment, transport and supplies to the invaders or that Pakistan officers are training, guiding and otherwise helping them.

For some time past, a situation has existed between the Dominion of India and the Dominion of Pakistan which has given rise to disputes that are likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security. Under Article

35 of the Charter of the United Nations, the Government of Pakistan hereby bring to the attention of the Security Council the existence of these disputes and request the Security Council to adopt appropriate measures for the settlement of these disputes and the restoration of friendly relations between the two countries. . . .

It has been announced by the Government of India that it is their intention after restoring "order" in the State to carry out a plebiscite to ascertain the wishes of the people in the matter of the accession of the State to India or to Pakistan. Anybody having the most superficial knowledge of the conditions that have prevailed in the State during the last 100 years would not hesitate to affirm that a plebiscite held while the Sikh and Hindu armed bands and the forces of the Union of India are in occupation of the State, and are carrying on their activities there, would be no more than a farce. A free plebiscite can be held only when all those who have during the last few months entered the State territory from outside, whether members of the Armed Forces or private, have been cleared out of the State, and peaceful conditions have been restored under a responsible, representative and impartial administration. Even then care must be taken that all those that have been forced or compelled to leave the State since the middle of August 1947 are restored to their homes, as it is apprehended that in the Jammu province and elsewhere whole areas have been cleared of their Muslim population. . . .

India obtained the accession of the State of Jammu and Kashmir by fraud and violence, and . . . large-scale massacre, looting and atrocities on the Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir State have been perpetrated by the Armed Forces of the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir and the Indian Union and by the non-Muslim subjects of the Maharaja and of the Indian Union. . . .

In conclusion, the Pakistan Government wish to assure the Security Council and the Government of India of their earnest desire to live on terms of friendship with India and to place the relations between the two countries on the most cordial, co-operative and friendly basis. The disputes to which the attention of the Security Council has been drawn in this document are all inter-related and are specific manifestations of the spirit that is poisoning the relationship between the two countries. The restoration of this relationship to a healthy and munificent state depends entirely upon a just and fair settlement of every one of these disputes being simultaneously achieved, Pakistan hopes and trusts that this will be secured as speedily as possible through the Security Council.

[Statement of Sir Mohammad Zafrulla Khan to the UN Security Council, Jan. 15, 1948, in *The Kashmir Question: Documents of the Foreign Relations of Pakistan*, ed. K. Sarwar Hasan and Zubeida Hasan (Karachi: Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, 1966), 115, 116, 120, 121–122, 124.]

PAKISTAN'S ANSWER TO THE SECURITY
COUNCIL RESOLUTION

As detailed in chapter 8 (Resolution adopted by the Security Council, April 21, 1948), the Security Council's response to India's request for action to settle the Kashmir dispute was embodied in a resolution urging that a plebiscite be held in Jammu and Kashmir, to permit the people to decide whether they wanted to join India or Pakistan; independence was not an option. Pakistan maintained that it had accepted the Security Council resolution, but that India had backed out of its earlier agreement to do so.

In the following section, when Sir Zafrulla Khan speaks of India's claim that certain changes had taken place that prevented the implementation of the agreement on a plebiscite, he is referring to the Indian argument that Pakistan's military alliance with the United States had changed the contours of power in South Asia.

Why is it alleged [by India] that the resolutions are no longer operative and that the plebiscite is no longer in order? I will comment briefly on some of the grounds. Firstly, it was stated that India had never agreed to the plebiscite. This again is manifestly contrary to the record. . . . Secondly, it has been stated [by India] that the resolutions have become inoperative because Pakistan has not complied with its obligation to withdraw its troops completely from the Azad Kashmir territories. . . . Now, the question of what the obligation undertaken by Pakistan and when it was to come into operation is in dispute between the two parties. . . . Thirdly, it is said [by India] that inasmuch as a long time has elapsed since the resolutions were accepted, their implementation is no long feasible. There the important question that arises is: Who is responsible for the long time that has elapsed without implementation? . . . Surely India could not then take advantage of its own default by saying that, since it has succeeded so long in blocking the implementation of the resolutions. . . . Fourthly, it is stated that certain changes have taken place that therefore the resolutions cannot be implemented. That, again, will depend on what type of changes have taken place. . . . Fifthly, it said that the . . . people of Kashmir have already expressed their wishes three times, during elections, with regard to the accession. . . .

[Statement of Sir Zafrulla Khan in the Security Council, June 22, 1962, in Hasan and Hasan, eds., *The Kashmir Question*, 376, 377, 378.]

AMERICAN AMBASSADOR HORACE HILDRETH:
PAKISTAN BECOMES A "TOLERABLE RISK"

A crucial development during these years was Pakistan's decision in 1954 to join military alliances with the United States at both bilateral and multilateral levels. The Americans were interested in having Pakistan as an ally in the Cold War context, in

order to counter what they described as the Communist threat from the Soviet Union. But Pakistan viewed this relationship, especially its provision of military assistance and training, as one that would strengthen Pakistan against India.

From the Pakistani side, Governor-General Ghulam Muhammad, Prime Minister Muhammad Ali Bogra, and army chief General Ayub Khan were keen to develop close diplomatic, economic, and military ties with the United States. The American officials found Pakistani leadership forthcoming, and in fact eager for stronger ties with the United States. Indeed, during his visit to Pakistan in 1953, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was delighted by the cooperative disposition of Pakistan's leadership, when it came to resisting communism. He was tremendously impressed by the martial and religious qualities of Pakistanis, and especially by General Ayub Khan. In contrast, Prime Minister Nehru of India was described as an utterly impractical statesman.¹⁰ This was the beginning of Pakistan's long and fateful dependence on the United States, and of India's parallel estrangement. Letters from the United States ambassadors in Pakistan to Washington reflect uneasiness at Pakistan's continuing demand for financial help. But the overall assessment was that the alliance with Pakistan was a tolerable risk, one that the United States could take. Even then, however, there were Pakistanis who thought it was not a tolerable risk for Pakistan.

There were several ups and downs in the United States–Pakistan relations in the subsequent years. Both developed complaints against each other, often doubting each other's commitment to friendship. The United States imposed its first arms embargo on Pakistan in September 1965, after India and Pakistan went to war. This embargo was eased later on, but Pakistan received only a small quantity of arms during the period 1967–1971. The US imposed another arms embargo in December 1971 when a new war broke out between Pakistan and India. The embargo was gradually eased through 1975, but no military assistance was provided to Pakistan; Pakistan could buy some small weapons on cash payment. Relations further deteriorated when the United States stopped all economic assistance and military sales to Pakistan in April 1979 for the reason that Pakistan was building a nuclear weapons program—a program that had begun in earnest in Pakistan under the leadership of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in the mid-1970s. This embargo was lifted in 1980 after Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan. The United States and Pakistan joined together to build Islamic-Afghan resistance to the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan. Pakistani territory was used to train and arm the Afghan *mujāhidīn* (fighters for a righteous cause) to fight the Soviets. It was in this period that Islamic militancy was promoted in Pakistan and Afghanistan by Pakistan and the United States.

The United States left the region after the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan. In October 1990 the United States invoked its law that disallowed any aid to a country that worked on a nuclear weapons program, thereby cutting off all economic and military assistance and military sales to Pakistan. This embargo lasted for eleven years. It was lifted after the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, because Pakistani support was needed to dislodge the Taliban and al-Qaeda militants

based in Afghanistan. From 2002 onward Pakistan and the United States cooperated extensively on counterterrorism in the region. The US began providing economic assistance directly and through international financial institutions. Military assistance and sales were also resumed. The United States declared that it would provide economic assistance to Pakistan on a long-term basis and help to build its military and paramilitary to fight terrorism. The partnership between the two countries, however, has been and remains fraught, with the United States alleging that Pakistan is not doing enough to fight terrorism in its territory, and Pakistan claiming that the United States interferes with its sovereignty.

At the start of the formal Pakistani–American military relationship, Ambassador Horace Hildreth, appointed by American president Dwight Eisenhower, wrote the following letter from Karachi on July 10, 1954.

In making the final decision as to how far the United States is prepared to underwrite Pakistan, the political, economic, and military factors must be considered together. Each is of great importance and each is inextricably linked with the other two. Previous decisions to assist Pakistan, whether by wheat, techniques, or arms, have been predicated on a belief in the survival of Pakistan and in its potential development as a firm member of the free world. (Probably the decision to give military aid was both hastened and influenced by the public statements of Mr. Nehru which made a refusal difficult for self-respecting sovereign nations.) The Embassy sees no reason to alter this judgment. It does, however, urge that as by each step we become more involved with the destinies of Pakistan, we analyze our objectives and our possible ultimate goals. We furthermore believe that if we increase our investment in Pakistan substantially we would be justified in putting more pressure on the [Government of Pakistan] to be more realistic in their own economic thinking and action. In order to become too strong too quickly, Pakistan is trying to move too fast and present us with the bill therefore. On the other hand, the present strongly pro-American administration puts great pressure on us for immediate economic help in order to protect its political prestige. In view of the lack of any signs of other political leaders, or knowledge of their sympathies if they should appear, the prestige of the current administration is a real asset to the best interests of the United States Government.

In raising the basic questions discussed in this dispatch, the Embassy is fully aware that they cannot be answered quickly. In fact, time and experience may be necessary before even tentative answers can be formulated. Nevertheless for the long pull it is believed that the importance of the questions is sufficient for them to be considered by the Policy Planning Staff and finally by the National Security Council.

Insofar as it is possible, the United States should be able to envisage what is to be expected of Pakistan. The Embassy believes Pakistan to be a tolerable risk. However, we believe our investment should be scrutinized with unrelenting

care. Prospects of returns must be compared with those expected from India and from Pakistan's Middle Eastern neighbors. American influence in Pakistan is increasing through decisions already taken. With influence comes responsibility. As we prepare to assist Pakistan to meet a critical economic emergency—and the Embassy recommends that we do give some assistance—let us carefully appraise what we can and should do in Pakistan over a several-year period.

[Letter of H. Hildreth, US Ambassador to Pakistan, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952–1954*, vol. 11: *Africa and South Asia* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1988), vol. 11, pt. 2, 1854–1855.]

1958–1971: THE HEGEMONY OF THE MILITARY

The final step in the ongoing process of dismantling democracy came on October 7, 1958, when President Iskander Mirza abrogated the 1956 Constitution and declared martial law, on the grounds that the country's politicians were incapable of maintaining law and order. His announcement cited violence inside the East Pakistan provincial assembly as evidence of the degeneration of the political process, and he criticized the assemblymen for their ruthless struggle for power and their exploitation of Islam.¹¹ Mirza appointed army chief General Ayub Khan as "Chief Martial Law Administrator," but Mirza himself did not last long. On October 27, 1958, Ayub Khan forced him to resign and exiled him to London. Ayub Khan also assumed the presidency.

Ayub Khan ruled the country under martial law from October 1958 to June 1962, when he imposed a presidential constitution, held nonparty indirect elections for the parliament, and civilianized his military rule by co-opting a section of the political elite. This civilianized military rule lasted until March 1969.

GENERAL AYUB KHAN: WHY MILITARY RULE WAS NECESSARY FOR PAKISTAN

Ayub Khan's military takeover marked the beginning of the political dominance of the military that manifested itself in several forms over the years, ranging from direct military rule, through generals ruling in civilian garb with a constitution, to generals maintaining a strong influence over policy-making, even when civilians were supposedly ruling the country. In his autobiography, a narrative condensed in 1965 from transcripts of spoken answers to interviewers' questions, Ayub Khan provided detailed explanations of why the military decided to step into the political domain. He described his military coup as a revolution.

I am receiving very depressing reports [towards the end of August 1958] about economic distress, maladministration through political interference, frustration

and complete loss of faith by the people in political leadership inclusive of the President. The general belief is that none of these men have any honesty of purpose, integrity or patriotism, to root out evils of the country which will require drastic action. The general belief is emerging that even I and the army are failing to do our duty by not saving the people from these tyrants. This dangerous belief is obviously based on the ignorance of the functions of the army, but when people become desperate they are apt to seek escape through any means. I wonder if they realize that if it was not for my keeping aloof from politics they would not have had this army and if this type of army was not there they would have lost their independence by now. . . .

The hour had struck. The moment so long delayed had finally arrived. The responsibility could no longer be put off. It was the 4th of October 1958, and as I settled down in my railway saloon I knew that an era was coming to an end. I was going to Karachi where an agonizingly prolonged political farce was drawing to a close. A few days earlier President Iskander Mirza had conveyed to me that the whole situation was becoming intolerable and that he had decided to act.

For years we had all hoped that the political leaders of the country would wake up to their grave responsibilities. Among them were patriotic men, men of talent and ability, some close associates of the Quaid-e-Azam who had guided the struggle for Pakistan with great vision, statesmanship, and unfaltering fervour and determination. Later they had seen the cool, courageous, and tenacious manner in which Liaquat Ali Khan was trying to steer the ship of state through turbulent water. Each for a time managed to grab the central trapeze caught in the beams of giant arc-lights, but the next moment hurtled down into a dark net of intrigue and incompetence.

I arrived in Karachi on 5 October. Yahya, Hamid, and one or two other officers had preceded me. I went to see General Iskander Mirza [the President]. He was sitting on the lawn, brooding, bitter and desperate. I asked him, have you made up your mind, sir. Yes, he replied. Do you think it is absolutely necessary? It is absolutely necessary, I said firmly. My reaction was that it was very unfortunate that such a desperate stage had been reached, necessitating drastic action. And it was not pleasant to get involved in it, but there was no escape. It was the last bid to save the country.

From that time onwards emotions had no place in the proceedings. Now that this job had to be done it must be done properly. A simple plan was formulated and put into operation. I advised General Iskander Mirza: "You had better inform your Prime Minister about the situation." He thought it was unnecessary, as he had no doubt about the legality of his action. I said: "I want two things from you in writing: one, that I will administer Martial Law; and the other, a letter to the Prime Minister that you have taken this decision, that the government has been dissolved, that you have abrogated the Constitution and declared Martial Law, and that you have appointed me to administer the Martial Law."

Revolutions take long and painstaking preparation, detailed planning, clandestine meetings, and country-wide movement of troops. In our case there was very little preparation. It was handled as a military operation. . . . The immediate objective was to rehabilitate the civil and constitutional organs of the State. They had become ineffective and oppressive through misuse and exploitation and needed the protection of Martial Law to recover their original sense of purpose so as to be able to operate within a constitutional framework.

Among the long-term objectives of the revolution was the introduction of major reforms designed to remove the confusion and imbalance in the social and economic life of the country. These reforms were to culminate in the introduction of a proper Constitution and restoration of constitutional life.

[Mohammad Ayub Khan, *Friends, Not Masters: A Political Autobiography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 68, 70–72, 77.]

GENERAL AYUB KHAN: THE CONSERVATIVE RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVE AND THE MODERN STATE

Ayub Khan came into conflict with the conservative religious forces led by Maulana Maududi and his political party, the Jamaat-e Islami, when he promulgated family laws (see the selection below) that were intended, among other purposes, to give greater protection to women in divorce and inheritance proceedings. His government also launched a large-scale family-planning program. These measures were attacked by Islamic groups as un-Islamic.

In the following excerpt from his autobiography, Ayub summed up what may be called the modernist view of the role of the religious authorities in national life.

My task, as I saw it, was to set up institutions which should enable the people of Pakistan to develop their material, moral, and intellectual resources and capacities to the maximum extent. The essential prerequisite of this task was to analyse the national problems objectively. I could not convince myself that we had become a nation in the real sense of the word; the whole spectacle was one of disunity and disintegration. We were divided in two halves, each half dominated by a distinct linguistic and cultural pattern. The geographical distance between the two halves was in itself a divisive factor which could be exploited to create all kinds of doubts and suspicions among the people. We had inherited a deep antagonism which separated the people in the countryside from the urban classes. The latter represented a small minority in the total population, but it was a vocal minority and the people in the villages suffered from a sense of domination and exploitation by the elite of the towns. Then there were the regional identities, which often asserted themselves to the exclusion of the national identity. . . . But more than anything else it was the irreconcilable nature of the forces of science and reason and the forces of dogmatism and revivalism which was operating against the unification of the people. . . . In more precise

terms the essential conflict was between the *ulema* and the educated classes. All that was material, temporal and secular was identified with the educated and all that was religious and spiritual became the monopoly of the *ulema*. . . .

How were these conflicts to be reconciled? Islam visualizes life as a unity and the Islamic code represents a complete cultural whole. . . . A man at home, at work, or at prayer is guided by the same code of behavior. . . . All this was true. But the picture of our society as I saw it, did not conform to this. In practice our life was broken up into two distinct spheres and in each sphere we followed a different set of principles. How were we to get out of this morass and adopt a unified approach to life? . . . We were fortunate to have a religion which could serve as a vehicle of progress. But superstition and ritualism had given us a fatalistic outlook which was completely contrary to the teachings and message of Islam. Muslim society could not move forward unless Islam was relieved of all the inhibiting and alien influences which had distorted its real character. . . .

There was universal agreement that the country should have a democratic constitution and a constitution which should enable the Community to organize itself according to the essential principles of Islam and to develop and progress with the times. . . . The question arose as to how the Community should discern and define the principles of Islam. There was no ready answer to this. No precedent of an Islamic Constitution was available. The Holy Qur'an contained the principles of guidance but did not prescribe a detailed Constitution for running a country. . . . The conclusion was inescapable that Islam had not prescribed any particular pattern of government but had left it to the Community to evolve its own pattern to suit its circumstances provided that the principles of the Qur'an and the Sunnah were observed. . . . It was clear to me that Pakistan must work out its own system of application of the principles of Islam in its conditions. It was equally clear to me that this exercise must be conducted within the accepted democratic norms of which the most important is the participation of the people in the affairs of the State. The right of the people as a whole to organize and run their affairs could not be curtailed or compromised in any manner. . . . I knew that the *ulema* would not be satisfied with this arrangement. They claimed the exclusive right to interpret and decide matters pertaining to Islam. While they maintained the claim, they refrained from producing any detailed Constitutional document, knowing that such an attempt would only expose their internal differences. . . .

The history of the *ulema* in this subcontinent has been one of perpetual conflict with the educated classes. The conflict came to a head during the struggle for Pakistan. . . . Now, I do not suggest that those among the *ulema* who opposed the creation of Pakistan were all men of easy conscience. Among them were people of ability and conviction, but there were also those who thought that Pakistan might mean the end of their authority. The best among them argued that the Indian freedom movement would be retarded if Hindus and Muslims did not act in union. Some also felt that Pakistan was essentially a ter-

ritorial concept and thus alien to the philosophy of Islamic brotherhood, which was universal in character. Both these arguments were the result of confused thinking and revealed a lamentable ignorance of the problems which the Muslims of the subcontinent were facing. . . . [But] the opposition offered by some of the *ulema* was not wholly the result of confused thinking or lack of awareness of the problems of the Muslims. Behind it was the consciousness of power. . . . The *ulema* knew that the leadership of the Muslims in the subcontinent was gradually passing to the modern educated classes who had found an eloquent and powerful spokesman in the Quaid-e-Azam. . . . It was this new leadership that the *ulema* dreaded and against which they aligned themselves with the Indian National Congress. . . .

Pakistan was the greatest defeat of the nationalist *ulema*. But they are a tenacious tribe and power is an irresistible drug. Soon after the establishment of Pakistan this type of *ulema* reorganised its forces. Now that Pakistan had been established, these people asked, who, indeed, except the *ulema*, could decide how the new Muslim state should be run. Some of the nationalist *ulema* decided to stay in India; others hastened to Pakistan to lend a helping hand. If they had not been able to save the Muslims from Pakistan, they must now save Pakistan from the Muslims. Among the migrants was Maulana Abul Ala Maudoodi, head of the Jamāat-e-Islami party, who had been bitterly opposed to Pakistan. He sought refuge there and forthwith launched a campaign for the Muslimization of the hapless people of Pakistan. This venerable gentleman was appalled by what he saw in Pakistan: an un-Islamic country, an un-Islamic government, and an un-Islamic people! How could any genuine Muslim owe allegiance to such a government! So he set about the task of convincing the people of their inadequacies, their failings, and their general un-worthiness.

All this was really a facade. The true intention was to re-establish the supremacy of the *ulema* and to reassert their right to lead the community. . . . The political *ulema* had two courses open to them: either to re-examine their own position and to revise their attitudes so that the people might be able to gain from their knowledge in dealing with their problems; or to demolish the position of the educated classes in the eyes of the God-fearing but uneducated masses. Not unnaturally, they adopted the latter course. A society which had just emerged from a century of foreign domination and was faced with the practical problems of building a new country suffered from many defects and weaknesses. The *ulema* concentrated on these. . . . They succeeded in converting an optimistic and enthusiastic people into a cynical and frustrated community. The *ulema* claimed that they knew all the answers and could easily solve all the problems of the country but that they were helpless as the country was in the control of the modern educated classes who had disowned Islam and taken to Western ways. Since no leadership could provide an immediate solution to all the problems of the community, the *ulema* were able to build up a large following for their point of view.

It is in this context that the demand for an Islamic Constitution was so ardently advocated by the *ulema*. Since no one had defined the fundamental elements of an Islamic Constitution, no Constitution could be called Islamic unless it received the blessings of all the *ulema*. The only way of having an Islamic Constitution was to hand over the country to the *ulema*.

[Ayub Khan, *Friends, Not Masters*, 194–201.]

THE YAHYA MILITARY REGIME AND THE SEPARATION OF EAST PAKISTAN

East Pakistan contained the majority of Pakistan's population, but the state power was concentrated in West Pakistan, which exercised political and economic dominance over the eastern wing, causing alienation and discontent. The political and societal elite from East Pakistan complained of the domineering and unfair role of the West Pakistan political elite, and of the partisanship of state institutions like the bureaucracy and the military. The reasons for this alienation are traced in chapter 10. The grievances of East Pakistan manifested themselves in the 1954 provincial elections, when the ruling Muslim League lost badly to the United Front, a coalition of several East Pakistani political parties, parties that sought autonomy and greater power-sharing.

In 1966 the leader of the Awami League, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, formulated a six-point charter of demands—for a federal Pakistan with a parliamentary form of government in which all powers other than defense and foreign affairs would be left to the federating states; for an end to the draining of capital from East to West; for separate taxation, revenue, and foreign exchange earnings in East and West; and for a militia or para-military force for East Pakistan. These demands became central to future visions of an independent East Pakistan.

When street agitation paralyzed Ayub Khan's government, he resigned and handed over power to the army chief, General Yahya Khan, on March 25, 1969; Yahya Khan then abrogated the Constitution and imposed martial law. His military regime held general elections in December 1970. The Awami League, led by Mujibur Rahman, won 160 out of 162 general seats allocated to East Pakistan. It did not put up any candidate in West Pakistan, where the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto won 81 out of 138 general seats allocated to West Pakistan.

The election results entitled Mujibur Rahman to become prime minister, but the negotiations for the transfer of power between the military regime and the Awami League failed: the military regime and most West Pakistani political leaders thought that Mujibur Rahman was committed to the separation of East Pakistan. The military regime decided on March 25, 1971, to crush East Pakistan's demands by resorting to a ruthless military crackdown. India entered the war on the side of the separatists, with the results that on December 16, 1971, Pakistan lost the India–Pakistan War, and the separatists in East Pakistan

succeeded in establishing Bangladesh as an independent state. The military regime of Yahya Khan collapsed, and power was handed over to a civilian leader, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, on December 20.

The three selections that follow—one by a politician in Pakistan, another by a Pakistani civil servant in Dhaka, and a third by a Pakistani writer—show the complexity of the feelings about East Pakistan among West Pakistanis at the time of the breakup of the two wings.

ZULFIKAR ALI BHUTTO: THE GREAT TRAGEDY

The following selection, written and published in September 1971—three months before West Pakistan lost East Pakistan—gives Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's perspective on the negotiations between the military government and the Awami League. Bhutto (1928–1979) was foreign minister under Ayub Khan from 1962 to 1966. In 1967 Bhutto left Ayub's cabinet and founded the pro-democratic Pakistan People's Party, which eventually came to power when Yahya Khan resigned after the defeat of Pakistan and the loss of Bangladesh.

The [Six Point] formula taken as a whole was a veiled charter for a confederation which contained the genesis of constitutional secession. Six Points envisaged a Central Government bereft of all powers except in the matter of Defence and Foreign Affairs, the latter being limited by the exclusion of foreign trade and aid. All other subjects including currency and taxation were to be within the jurisdiction of the provinces. This was indeed a unique constitutional proposal. Such a Central Government, divested of any real authority, would have become completely helpless amid the clamour of five warring provinces each asserting its own brand of sub-nationalism and each torn in different directions by foreign powers.

Foreign policy, particularly in the Third World, is generally concerned with economic development and international trade and aid. Thus, under the Six Point formula a large part of foreign affairs would be excluded from the competence of the Central Government, leaving war and confrontation as the only major matters of concern to it. . . . With the Central Government reduced to a nullity, and with the bisection of foreign affairs, a death-blow would have been dealt to Pakistan's international relations, and particularly her outstanding disputes with India. Defence affairs are in turn closely associated with foreign policy. Without full control over foreign policy, the Central Government would not be in a position to determine and implement an effective defence policy. . . .

With . . . the genuine grievances of East Pakistan to play upon, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman unleashed hatred against West Pakistan. He blamed West Pakistan for everything. Although he called himself a socialist, instead of attacking the system of capitalism, he attacked the people of West Pakistan. . . . The

Bengali leader raised the emotions of his people to a frenzied pitch. . . . Our opponents tried to distort [the] truth by saying that we were denying the Awami League, the majority party, its right to rule the country. This is not correct. The majority party had the right to rule the country if it accepted one standard for the whole country, but not near-independence for East Pakistan together with its control of the Central Government to the exclusion of the wishes of the majority of the West Wing.

[Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, *The Great Tragedy* (Karachi: Pakistan People's Party, 1971), 11, 12, 14, 19.]

HASAN ZAHEER: THE SEPARATION OF EAST PAKISTAN

Hasan Zaheer joined the Civil Service of Pakistan in 1954, and served in various districts and in the secretariat under the government of the former East Pakistan from 1956 to 1962. In May 1971 he was posted to Dhaka again and was there at the time of the Pakistani army's surrender. His memoirs give a fresh, on-the-ground perspective on the fighting in East Pakistan from a West Pakistani army man who had had a long career of involvement in the East; they also describe the West Pakistanis' near-total lack of understanding of the situation in East Pakistan.

This selection has been taken from Zaheer's description of the last three weeks before Pakistan's surrender to India.

In the middle of November [1971], I had come to Islamabad during the Eid holidays, and arranged some meetings to extend the stay on official business. In spite of the fact that the situation in all respects was the worst that the country had ever been placed in, the regime was exuding confidence. The line in the official media was the same that was being repeated for the last seven months: the overwhelming majority of Bengalis were for united Pakistan, stories of atrocities were fabrications of India and the foreign correspondents, and that any attack on East Pakistan would mean an all-out Indo-Pakistan war. The independent Press was still more hawkish and it even accused the television and radio of not projecting the ideological-cum-patriotic theme enough to boost the morale of the people. As I moved round the military and civilian circles of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, I became certain that war with India was imminent. There was consensus among the vocal and influential classes that this was the only solution to the crisis. Everyone was expecting substantial gains on the western front which would counterbalance the Indian military moves in the east; East Pakistan would be defended on the plains of the Punjab. This was the doctrine on which the entire defence structure of Pakistan was built and which the people had been led to believe for the last twenty-five years. But in the general enthusiasm for victories in the west, although no one was thinking specifically of its separation, East Pakistan vaguely figured as a side issue; the psyche was to retrieve the fruits of victory of which the nation was deprived by Ayub's cease-fire in the 1965 war. . . .

This exuberant saber-rattling was in stark contrast to the bleak life in East Pakistan. The army there had moved out to the borders, and the guerrillas had a free run of Dhaka except during the few daylight hours. Those of us who had been witnessing the gradual demoralization and fatigue of the army, and the increasing boldness of the insurgents over the last seven months had no illusions about the capabilities of the armed forces to hold East Pakistan. In private conversation, the army officers serving there agreed with this assessment. In West Pakistan, few in the higher civil service, or for that matter in the army high command, had an idea of the ground conditions in the East; few of them cared to visit it after March, from the President [Yahya Khan] downward, and those who did, believed war a desirable solution. My colleagues were imbued with the spirit of the times. They showed concern about our plight and safety in Dhaka, were extra polite, and invited me to dinners, but for all their light-heartedness I might have been an alien from a distant land. . . .

I managed to get a seat for Dhaka on the night of 30 November and 1 December. These were grave times. East Pakistan was far off, surrounded by the sea or the enemy, and it was not easy to get out from it. The fragile air link could snap at any time. The final moment of farewell to my wife and daughter was not easy. I kissed them, and hurried into the darkness toward the plane. It would be more than two years before we met again. Many others went through the same agonies of pointless calls of duty “to serve” the people who did not want “outsiders” in their country. . . .

The Governor [of East Pakistan] on the morning of 14 December [when the fall of Dhaka was imminent] directed in writing that the group of West Pakistan civil servants should seek refuge in the neutral zone. Farman Ali called the representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross and asked them to allow us to shift to the hotel. They went back and an hour later, presumably after checking up with the *mukti bahini* [East Pakistani freedom-fighters] or the Indians, rang back to invite us to the neutral zone. So we packed up and once more moved out in a small procession and reached the Inter-Continental [Hotel] at about 12 noon. . . .

Soon after we left the Governor House, it was strafed by the IAF [Indian Air Force] while a cabinet meeting was going on. There was nothing left of the government, the administration, or the army now in Dhaka. The Governor had been trying to talk to Yahya who did not take the call. During all the days since the start of the war, the President had never once spoken to his representative in Dhaka. In the afternoon the Governor resigned, and he and the Chief Secretary also shifted to the hotel. This was the end of the 24-year old East Pakistan government.

[Hasan Zaheer, *The Separation of East Pakistan: The Rise and Realization of Bengali Muslim Nationalism* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1994), 357–359, 404–405.]

ASIF FARRUKHI: THE 1971 WAR FROM A CHILD'S
PERSPECTIVE IN PAKISTAN

Asif Farrukhi (b. 1959), a physician by training, is also a writer, editor, and translator who lives in Karachi. Since 1998 he has written a number of short story collections, several in English, and he also translates world literature into Urdu.

The story chosen below depicts the impact on children in West Pakistan of the antagonisms between the eastern and western wings in 1971.

The clamour doesn't cease, not even for a moment, as they leave one by one. They just put their things together and leave. No one says goodbye, no one says anything. They don't say anything either. There is no sound of books being shut loudly, desks banging, feet scraping, the sort of commotion that arises as soon as the bell for half-time sounds. No, there is none of that. Soundlessly, wordlessly, they vanish. One by one, and in the rows of faces there come to be blank spaces where once they had been.

It strikes you out of the blue: Arre, so and so used to be here. . . . You know . . . what's his name. And so and so . . . Arre bhai, where did they all go? They have left a void which isn't apparent at first glance.

But no one asks this question. There is such a din as it is.

"Here we are ready and waiting to go." The school band is practicing this song with full fervour. It is not the school anthem. You are confused and your heart is sinking. It's all gone wrong. If only this was a bad dream. But how can it be? The finger is pointing at you. Even if you sank under the weight of shame and regret, even then the ground wouldn't open and swallow you up. At the immigration counter the stern features of the official who scrutinizes the documents start looking familiar. And in the blink of an eye he starts shouting in Mrs. Cunningham's booming voice: "Hurry up! Come on! Next! Who's next?"

You know who's next. It's you. Now you can't get away. You drag yourself forward as if your very life is ebbing away. You are dying; your eyes can't focus, cold sweat pours down the back of your neck and numbs your body. . . .

"Zamir! Zamir! What's got into you?" The hands that shake you awake belong to Samina. It takes a few seconds to realise that you are at home, in your own bed. That you are not clutching that old school desk, quaking with fear at Mrs. Cunningham's scolding, reliving that far away moment that has been recurring in your dreams for many days.

Had it not been for the Maths period, I would perhaps never have known that they were any different from us. They would have been just like the other boys. Except that they were darker and their teeth gleamed when they laughed. In fact, all the boys were different—their faces, their school bags, the way they came to school, their mothers and fathers were all different. When Maqsood got down from his sparkling jeep, his khaki-clad driver would come up to the classroom with his bag and thermos and salute smartly. Abrar usually came by

bus to Empress Market. Books in hand, unencumbered to an enviable extent (for us) by a bag, he would turn up at school smiling, whistling, strolling here and there. Ahmed Ali's father was away somewhere, while Yamin's father was dead. Yes, differences there were many.

The bell would ring and it would be time for lessons. Mrs. Cunningham would come in and ask us to open our books. Rashid would open his mouth wide whenever he took the name of the lesson, "Airamathik," while Bosco would enunciate with great style: "Vithmathik." We were learning that we should write the name of this subject as: "Mathematics" in our copy books. Because now, along with arithmetic, it also included algebra and geometry. We had moved up a class now.

Moving up a class was such a nuisance. It meant an increasing in schoolwork. Sometimes, I would get fed up and ask myself: What's going to happen in the future? It's getting more and more difficult: problems of addition, lowest common denominator, highest common factor, unitary method, fractions. . . . It seems as though it wasn't sums but something else altogether, a fearful dream. I didn't quite understand it all, sitting in the classroom, lost in my own thoughts. When Mrs. Cunningham pounced on me, I would come to with a start and, looking across at Abdul Batin sitting at the desk in front of me, begin to copy down from his book. Abdul Batin would surreptitiously explain to me and help me to copy but he always laughed at me. (Whenever he laughed, his white teeth gleamed against his brown skin.) He was always the first to finish the class work and take it up to Mrs. Cunningham to be checked. Putting a star on the page she would proudly announce to the whole class: "For him it is Math-e-magic!"

If it wasn't magic then what else was it? It was very puzzling. I even asked my father. "These people eat fish. That's what makes them so brainy," he used to say. . . .

Of course, I knew who they were. Just as we all knew who everyone in the class was. But that this would make a difference was something I could not have imagined before that day. It was a bad day and there were many bad days like that. Ammi had reduced my TV watching time. There were now different kinds of songs on the TV: "Keep the candles burning / For this house bears a thousand burdens / This house is after all your own," and other stuff like that. But why keep the candles burning? Would there be no electricity in the house? And what's happened that one has to tell everyone that it is one's own? I couldn't understand. It was bothering me more than ever. Was arithmetic not enough that algebra had also started confusing us from this term? Abdul Batin's book would remain open with the same generosity but on top of that he would explain secret things to me too.

One day he let me into his secret: the secret of Math-e-Magic. Leading me into a corner of the classroom in a voice barely above a whisper, he said: "There is a golden rule. Just learn that and you won't have any problem for the rest of your life."

"What's that?" My curiosity was increasing.

"BODMAS," he replied.

"What?" I was dumbfounded.

"Yes, BODMAS. My Daddy says get this by heart, then you'll never make mistakes in algebra. Bracket, of, division, multiplication, addition, subtraction. Abbreviate these: BODMAS!"

I nodded, as though I had just received the key to a treasure chest. Thanking him, I returned to my desk, so as to note it down in my exercise book at once. Maqsood was standing there. He looked at me and made a face. Without lowering his voice, he said: "He's a traitor. Stop being friends with him."

Understanding a little bit but not fully, I laughed, "Why, what's up? Who do you mean?"

But Maqsood walked off without bothering to reply. I looked towards Abdul Batin, hoping he hadn't heard. But he had his head down and was still solving problems. My heart missed a beat. Something was about to happen. I could sense it but couldn't say what.

I was in such a muddle that the following day I couldn't even remember BODMAS until the end of class. Mrs. Cunningham gave me detention again at half-time. All the others had gone out. I was still at my desk trying to solve the problems. The desk in front was empty. Mrs. Cunningham had spread the *Morning News* out in front and was trying to do the Get-A-Word. Suddenly there was a noise outside the classroom. I peeped out of the window. A large number of boys from the class had gathered there. I shot out like an arrow and joined them.

My classmates had formed a circle and in the middle of it was Abdul Batin. "He's a traitor," Maqsood said to me. "He is our enemy. My father and his friends say that all of them are the same. They don't observe the blackout. They go out on to the roof tops at night and make signals to the enemy planes with their torches."

I stared at Abdul Batin. He looked even darker, and there was no smile on his face.

"Traitor! Traitor!" the boys were chanting. Maqsood would utter one word and all of them would repeat it. "Bengali Babu came . . ." It had become a refrain. "Bengali Babu came / Brought a stolen hen." Everyone was clapping in time with the tune. "Hen used her claws / Bengali Babu's bald."

At that there would be the stinging sound of slaps raining down on Abdul Batin's head and from which he could not shield himself with his hands.

"Bengali Babu came . . . you also say it," Maqsood egged me on. Then he stopped. Abdul Batin's pants had become even wetter than his face.

"Shame, shame! Chee, chee! Shame, shame!" Maqsood was shouting and all the boys were clapping. We were moving around in a circle and Abdul Batin was standing in the middle.

"What nonsense . . . !" Mrs. Cunningham's voice stopped us in our tracks. "You *gaddhas*, you *kuttas*, you *ulloos*," she was yelling in her own inimitable

way. But the tears were streaming down, and her face was even wetter than Abdul Batin's pants.

From that day on Abdul Batin never came to school again. Later someone said that he had gone away with his parents because their country had separated from ours.

I still remember BODMAS, although it is of little use to me today. But there is one thing I don't understand. The whole class got detention and Mrs. Cunningham also complained to Father Pinto. He spent a long time explaining to us lovingly, scolding us, threatening us, he even made us apologize. Why then do I suddenly feel uneasy? As though I was sitting at that very same desk and Mrs. Cunningham was about to call out in punishment: "Next!" Is it now my turn?

I am sitting at that desk, my stomach churning with fear. And I will continue to cower there until my turn does come.

[Asif Farrukhi, "Expelled," trans. Durdana Soomro, in Niaz Zaman and Asif Farrukhi, ed., *Fault Lines: Stories of 1971* (Dhaka: University Press, 2008), 133–138.]

1972–1977: CIVILIAN RULE BY ZULFIKAR ALI BHUTTO: DEMOCRACY AND ISLAMIC SOCIALISM

Internationally, the loss of East Pakistan coincided with the Middle East oil boom, and Pakistani leaders took advantage of this new change in the balance of world economic power to shift their orientation toward the Middle East, and away from subcontinental politics, where Pakistan's claims—on East Pakistan, on Kashmir—were being challenged. From this period also dates Pakistan's turn to China, in an effort to counter India's increasing ties to the Soviet Union.

Domestically, as the new prime minister of Pakistan, Bhutto declared it his intention to restore a sense of national identity and self-confidence to the shattered country, in the aftermath of the separation of Bangladesh. With the support of the opposition, he formulated a new "1973 constitution"; like the previous two constitutions, this new one assigned sovereignty to God, and maintained that no law would conflict with the teachings and principles of Islam. While recognizing Islam as the state religion, the Constitution established a parliamentary system of government, with the prime minister as the chief executive and the president in a ceremonial role.

On the whole, however, Bhutto's government did not press very vigorously for the Islamization of Pakistan—although, bowing to pressure from Islamic religious leaders, he did amend the Constitution to declare the Ahmadiyya community non-Muslim. He emphasized socialist economic policies. Ten industries were nationalized: iron and steel, basic metal, heavy engineering, heavy electrical, motor vehicles, tractor plants, heavy and basic chemicals, cement, petrochemicals, and gas and oil refineries. Banks and private sector educational

institutions were also nationalized. Land reforms were introduced in 1972 and 1977. These policies irked Islamic groups and the big businesses that suffered as a result of nationalization.

*ZULFIKAR ALI BHUTTO:
MARCHING TOWARD DEMOCRACY*

The selection below illustrates the nature of the appeal of Bhutto and his political party, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), founded in 1967, with its socialist manifesto that paid due homage to the humanism and egalitarianism of Islam. The PPP emphasized that its aim was to serve the people by alleviating their poverty, by asserting Pakistan's independence, and by making the country strong, including the development of nuclear power as a protection against India. Like Indira Gandhi, who was known for her populist slogan "Garibi Hatāo!" ("Abolish Poverty!"), Bhutto's "Roti, Kapra, aur Makan!" ("Food, Clothing, and Shelter!") endeared him to many in Pakistan. He is also reported to have said, "If India builds the bomb, we will eat grass or leaves, even go hungry, but we will get one of our own."¹²

The following speech was delivered at Jinnah Park, Peshawar, on January 18, 1970.

What a disgrace it is that Pakistan which is the largest Islamic country has not been able to have a workable constitution during the last 22 years. Our first and foremost duty is to frame a constitution and I promise you that we shall fully co-operate in the framing of a constitution within 120 days. We shall work day and night and put in our best efforts to formulate a workable constitution. A constitution is the fundamental law of the land. It will be our endeavour to strengthen the country through democracy. We do not want that democracy should ever be endangered again. . . .

At the same time we believe that unless the economic system is changed no constitution or democracy can help the country. For us this is a fundamental question. We want to banish poverty and misery from the country. . . . Our only difference with the other leaders is that they support the capitalists. They believe in retaining this system which has sucked the blood of the people. When we say that we want to change this system it is said that Islam is in danger. How can Islam be in danger in Pakistan? This is a Muslim country and we are all Muslims. I say Islam can never be in danger. Islam is an eternal religion. It can never be in danger. It is not Islam which is in danger; it is the rich people who are in danger. . . .

My dear friends, the fact is that without the progress of the people there can be no progress in Pakistan. There can be no prosperity if the people are hungry. Under these circumstances Pakistan can never progress. We want to establish equality in accordance with our religion. Equality is absolutely in keeping with our religion, just as democracy is in accordance with Islam. All these leaders want democracy and we accept that Islam contains the principles of democracy. At the same time the parliamentary system of England is nowhere mentioned

in the Hadith or the Quran. This system has been given to us by the British. They fought against the Muslims and enslaved the Islamic countries, not only in the subcontinent but also in the Middle East. If the parliamentary system which we have inherited from the British, who ruled over us and exploited us, is acceptable, why is the equality of Islam not acceptable to these gentlemen? . . .

Quaid-i-Azam upheld Islamic Socialism. He supported it before and after the establishment of Pakistan. Our opponents cannot deny that. That is why they opposed the Quaid-i-Azam because he wanted "Islamic socialism," because there was to be equality in Pakistan and these people did not want equality.

[Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, *Marching Towards Democracy: A Collection of Articles, Statements, and Speeches*, ed. Hamid Jalal and Khalid Hasan (Rawalpindi: Pakistan Publication, 1973), 17–18, 19.]

MAHBUB UL-HAQ: 22 FAMILIES OWN 66 PERCENT OF PAKISTAN

One of the cornerstones of Bhutto's attack on Ayub Khan, and his rationale for the nationalization of banks and industries, was the assertion by Mahbub ul-Haq (1934–1998), a noted Pakistani economist and in 1968 the chief economist of the Planning Commission, that just twenty-two families owned 66 percent of the industrial wealth of the country, and controlled 87 percent of the country's banking and insurance assets. The formula "22 families" has become broadly understood and used in Pakistan.

In the essay that follows, written for the *London Times* on March 22, 1973, five years after his initial claim made such an impact, Huq reflects on his usage of the term.

Five years ago I made a speech alleging that 22 industrial family groups had come to dominate the economic and financial life of Pakistan and that they controlled about two-thirds of industrial assets, 80 per cent of banking and 79 percent insurance.

At that time, Pakistan was still living through a period of great euphoria. President Ayub was completing his tenth term in office and the country was cheerfully celebrating his first decade of development. Pakistan had undoubtedly done extremely well economically under President Ayub's pragmatic leadership and almost all key economic indicators pointed to a fast rate of expansion. The growth rate in the gross national product had been nearly 6 per cent a year for a decade and a healthy export performance of 8 per cent a year had defied many predictions.

However, some of us who were living closely with the economic management of the country had already begun to develop our doubts about the long-term viability of such a pattern of growth. While the world was still applauding Pakistan as a model of development—since outside donors always need some

success stories for their own comfort—we were getting quite concerned that all was not well with the distribution of benefits of growth.

Some of the indices were fairly disturbing. The real disparity in the per capita incomes of East and West Pakistan had more than doubled during this decade even though we were reluctant to admit it publicly. The real wages of the industrial workers, concentrated in a few key urban areas, had been reduced by about a third by a combination of inflation and weak bargaining power of the unions. Personal income inequalities had increased substantially.

It was evident that most people had remained unaffected by the forces of economic change since the development had fast become warped in favour of a privileged minority.

One can best illustrate this imbalance by looking at the distribution of certain public and private services. From 1958 to 1968 Pakistan imported or domestically assembled private cars worth \$300 million while spending only \$20 million on buses. During the same period, about 80 per cent to 90 per cent of private construction can only be described as luxury housing.

It was in these circumstances that I tried to focus national attention on justice in the distribution of wealth in the midst of celebration over a rapid rate of growth. I say this with no desire for self-vindication because I recall how painful a decision it was. I was chief economist of the National Planning Commission and much of what I had to say was an indictment of the economic policies of the Government during a period in which I was intimately associated with planned development.

It was little surprise to me that the mention of 22 families in that atmosphere was treated as a bombshell, both by a stunned Government and by the private sector in Pakistan. It is most annoying to question success right in the midst of it. What surprises me, however, is that in the past five years there has been so little analysis of the basic issues inherent in Pakistan's industrial and economic situation and so little action despite all the hysteria about the 22 families. This has been disappointing because references to 22 families should only be treated as symbolic of the basic problems of income distribution and social justice in Pakistan.

A myth has spread by now that the 22 families own all the wealth in Pakistan. This is simply not true. The problem must be viewed in its proper perspective. The modern industrial sector was, at most, 10 per cent of the national product of Pakistan in 1968 (including East Pakistan) and now is about 15 per cent of the national product of West Pakistan. Even if the 22 families control two-thirds of the industrial assets in the modern sector—and the word is control, not own—it still represents a rather limited control over total wealth in Pakistan.

The distinction, unfortunately, was lost in the heated discussions of the past five years. What is more, it was not so much the concentration of income and wealth in the hands of a few industrial family groups which raised fundamental

questions of policy. Such a concentration was probably inevitable in the initial stages of development and to give them their due, the early entrepreneurs did an excellent job of rapid industrialization. What gave us real cause for anxiety was the growing collusion between industrial and financial interests so that a few family groups had come to acquire control over basic economic decision making.

For all practical purposes, the 22 families had become by 1968 both the planning commission and the ministry of finance for the private sector. They preempted most investment permits, import licenses, foreign credits and government patronage because they controlled or influenced most of the decision-making forums handing out such permissions. They had virtually established a stranglehold on the system and were in a position to keep out any new entrepreneurs.

The 22 families were a by-product of government policies and a primitive capitalistic system. The Government did not have the courage to change the company law of 1913 under which the industrial sector of Pakistan was still being governed in 1968. This antiquated framework of capitalism permitted the industrial sector to have managing agencies, cartels, trusts and all other anti-social practices aimed at cheating both the consumer and the Government. The latter became both a conscious and unconscious ally of the private industrialists by giving them generous protection, excessive tax concessions, explicit and hidden subsidies, and representation on many decision making forums.

If we are to evaluate properly the role of the 22 families in Pakistan, we must see it in the perspective of the capitalist system that the country has evolved over time. In blunt terms, Pakistan's capitalist system is still one of the most primitive in the world. Under it economic feudalism prevails. A handful of people, whether landlords or industrialists or bureaucrats, make all the basic decisions and the system often works simply because there is an alliance between various vested interests.

Unfortunately, most of the criticism of the 22 families in the past five years has been directed to individual family groups rather than to the reform of the basic framework of capitalism. The present Government has introduced some limited reforms by abolishing the managing agency system and introducing a more progressive labour policy as well as by taking away management though not ownership, of certain key industries. However, these are rather small patches on a thoroughly rotten fabric of a primitive and feudal economic system. What is required is a fairly drastic surgery if a move towards a more enlightened and socially responsible capitalism is to be made.

Pakistan badly needs to broaden the base of its economic and political power to evolve a development strategy that reaches out to the bulk of the population; and to innovate a new lifestyle which is more consistent with its own poverty and its stage of development. This is not going to be easy because in the past, modernization was foisted on a basically feudal structure in which political

participation was often denied, growth of responsible institutions stifled and free speech curbed, and where all economic and political power gravitated towards a small minority.

There is not much that can be done to save development from being warped in favour of a few in a system like this unless the basic premises of the system are changed. The new constituency of peasants, labour and students that President Bhutto hopes to fashion has still not taken shape. Unless there is such a new constituency, unless the existing power structure is drastically shaken, there is not much of a mandate or instrument available for radical change.

The slogan of 22 families, therefore, has been rather overdone in Pakistan and taken too literally. At times, it has become a convenient camouflage for action against a few individual industrialists rather than reforming the economic, as well as social and political institutions. This is sad because the 22 families are a symptom, not a cause. The basic problem is not the 22 families, individually or collectively, but the system that created them. And it is time that Pakistan looked to the basic causes of its problems and not merely to the symptoms.

[Mahbub ul-Haq, "System Is to Blame for the 22 Wealthy Families,"
<http://www.mhhd.org/html/speeches.htm>.]

ZULFIKAR ALI BHUTTO: THE MYTH OF INDEPENDENCE

In addition to his economic populism, Bhutto's criticism of Pakistan's dependence on the United States, and his argument that American policy was to bring Pakistan under Indian hegemony, also contributed to his popular appeal. Anti-Americanism was strong despite all the military aid that the United States had given to Pakistan.

The United States' position is fairly clear. What it is after is in its highest global interest and to that extent understandable. The fact that Pakistan has to pay a high price is relevant only to the people of Pakistan. It would be better to face the ordeal dispassionately rather than with a torrent of protest, which subsides without any corresponding benefit to the national cause. This is not the first crisis in Pakistan's relations with the United States. The pattern has been fairly evident for quite some time. Each successive action the United States has taken has been for the attainment of fixed objectives. Each crisis has been followed by voluble press comments and a spate of statements, which are afterwards relegated to the archives. This strategy could be described as a Please Punch approach, a method to confuse the leadership of Pakistan and weaken the resolve of its people against an overall compromise.

An action is taken to move Pakistan towards global alignment, which occasions loud but ineffectual protests. Then an economic carrot is dangled in front of the Pakistan Government to persuade its official spokesmen to return to their desks. The inducement has taken many forms: the supply of food under PL-480, on conditions varying with the requirements of United States' diplomacy;

project and commodity aid, determined separately and collectively in Consortium meetings held twice a year by the World Bank; project aid outside the consortium, as in support of the Indus Basin Treaty and salinity and water-logging projects; support for the Pakistani rupee; and the utilization of counterpart funds for rural development and other similar projects. Again, after a decent lapse of time, comes another punch prompting protests which are soothed by further economic palliatives; and so the caravan moves towards its destination. This pattern of action began in November 1959, when there was a border skirmish between India and China on the heights of the Ladakh plateau. . . .

With the change of the United States' attitude, neutrality and non-alignment, once denounced by Dulles as immoral, began to gain respectability. The world was reminded of India's importance, of the vastness of her territory, and the significance of her large population. There were pressing reasons why she should be made a show-piece of democracy in Asia. In 1961 disproportionate economic assistance was allocated to non-aligned India in preference to aligned Pakistan. . . . The next painful punch came during the Sino-Indian border clash of 1962, when the United States seized the opportunity to pour in massive military assistance to India in contravention of its commitments to Pakistan. Subsequently, a long-term military assistance commitment was made in 1964 to non-aligned, neutral India to the peril of aligned Pakistan, in violation of a prior commitment. In short, the sub-continent's frantic arms race was introduced and encouraged by the United States. . . .

In our neo-colonial times, methods of coercion are more refined, as India and Pakistan have not been alone in discovering. Some countries have been able to resist submission to the hegemony of Global Powers, others have not. We in Pakistan, however, are concerned with our own situation. Our dependence on the United States in the military field has been total and not inconsiderable in economic and food requirements. . . .

It might be said that the extension of America's influence in our sub-continent is rather different from the concessions given to the European trading communities, and there are indeed differences; but why should one see less danger in today's foreign military base than in the peaceful trading stations of the past? Those peaceful trading stations turned out to be bridgeheads for conquest.

[Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, *The Myth of Independence* (Lahore: Oxford University Press, 1969), 85–89.]

ZULFIKAR ALI BHUTTO: THE DEATH CELL AND HISTORY

After a coup, Bhutto was arrested by the military government of General Zia ul-Haq in 1977 on the charge of conspiring to kill an opposition leader. In a trial widely viewed as unfair—and despite international calls for clemency—he was given the death sentence by the Lahore High Court and the Supreme Court. Zia's military government carried out the death sentence on April 4, 1979.

While in prison Bhutto wrote a remarkable book on his career and fate. Published in India, the book refutes the charges made against him. The military government denied the authenticity of the book, but it is generally accepted as Bhutto's work.

Since 18th March 1978, I have spent twenty-two to twenty-three hours out of the twenty-four in a congested and suffocating death cell. I have been hemmed in by its sordidness and stink throughout the heat and the rain of the long hot summer. The light is poor. My eye sight has worsened. My health has been shattered. I have been in solitary confinement for almost a year, but my morale is high because I am not made of the wood which burns easily. Through sheer will-power, in conditions that are adverse in the extreme, I have written this rejoinder.

It is said that some good comes out of the worst of evils. The good that might come out of this evil document is that perhaps the confusion over scurrilous publicity and the right of public trial will be removed once and for all. When I protested on the conversion of my trial for murder from open proceedings into an in camera trial for my defence, somehow I could not make clear to the Judges the difference between publicity and justice. I was demanding a public trial because the concept of justice is inextricably intertwined with an open trial. The political and legal struggle for an open trial, especially if it involves capital punishment, is writ large in golden letters.

Forget the fact that I have been the President and Prime Minister of Pakistan. Forget the fact that I am the leader of the premier party of this country. Forget all these things. But I am a citizen of this country, and I am facing a murder trial. Even the ordinary citizen—and I consider myself one—is not denied justice.

I was not a practising lawyer. From 9th January 1978, I was not being defended by lawyers. I had not heard the prosecution witnesses during my long illness and absence from the court. I had been insulted and humiliated by the court during the open trial for three months. The prosecution case had received the full blast of publicity. The trial had been converted into a secret conclave. The dice was completely loaded against me. But with all those harrowing handicaps, when I sought to address the closed court in defence of my life, I was not permitted because I wanted to hear the Prosecution before replying as a layman, without legal notes, without the aid of law books and legal rulings.

It is wrong to state that I did not try to co-operate with the trial bench. Nothing short of my life was at stake. I had sense enough to extend co-operation and courtesy to those who would tell me that I should hang until I am dead. But the trial bench wanted me to prostrate myself before it. This is why I had to tell the bench that I would not crawl and cringe before it. A Muslim can only prostrate himself before his Creator. But the bench, in particular the Chief Justice, was always rude, abrasive and insulting to me. In striking contrast, the Chief Justice was kindness itself to the confessing co-accused. He smiled at them. He enjoyed their rustic sense of humour at my expense. He was patient with them in

a fatherly fashion. He would translate the questions in Urdu and Punjabi for them whenever he thought that they were not able to follow the English. The taunts, the frowns and shouts were reserved only for me. I was favoured with the commands to “shut up, get up” and “take this man away until he regains his senses.” In these circumstances, to talk of co-operation is to ask for the patience of a saint.

[Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, “The Death Cell and History,” in *If I Am Assassinated* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1979), 194–195.]

1977–1988: MILITARY RULE AND ISLAMIZATION: THE ZIA YEARS

During this period Pakistan was ruled by the army chief, General Zia ul-Haq (1977–1988), who dislodged Bhutto’s civilian government on July 5, 1977, and ruled under martial law until December 30, 1985. He civilianized his military rule by restoring the Constitution (with changes to strengthen his position), held carefully regulated nonparty elections, and co-opted a section of the political elite. He ruled under civilian dispensation until August 17, 1988, when he died in an air crash. The civilianization of his military rule did not shift his power base; he continued to hold the office of army chief, and to derive his primary support from the army.

Zia ul-Haq used the state apparatus to enforce Islam on conservative and orthodox lines. This was done partly because of his own religious convictions, and partly as a matter of political expediency. This policy enabled him to cultivate Islamic groups and parties to legitimize his rule, and undercut the opposition by major political parties like the PPP and others. His identification with highly conservative and orthodox Islamic groups increased as Pakistan engaged in building up Afghan-Islamic resistance with the help of the United States and conservative Arab states like Saudi Arabia, in order to challenge the Soviet troop presence in Afghanistan during the years 1979 to 1989. This policy helped the Zia regime to obtain diplomatic acceptance at the international level, and it obtained economic and military assistance from the United States and other sources.

Six aspects of Zia’s policy of implementation of Islam are noteworthy: First, Islamic “Shariat” benches were established at the provincial high court level in 1979. One year later, a Federal Shariat Court replaced various Shariat benches. A Shariat Appellate Bench was set up in the Supreme Court. Some of the judges for these courts/benches were Islamic scholars. Second, five laws were introduced in 1979 requiring the imposition of Islamic punishment for certain crimes. These laws were collectively called the Hudood Ordinances (see below), and were objected to by women’s groups as being discriminatory against women. Other laws also viewed as discriminatory included a Punishment and Compensation law, proposed in 1982, and the Law of Evidence, of 1984. Third,

interest-free banking was gradually introduced. A compulsory Islamic tax called "Zakat" was imposed on bank savings accounts and other investments at the rate of 2.5 percent per annum. Fourth, school and college courses were revised to accommodate orthodox Islamic teachings and a nationalistic ideology of Pakistan. Generous funding was made available for religious education. Fifth, Islamic codes were strictly imposed on social life, including Islam-oriented censorship of cinema, television, and other cultural and literary activities. Sixth, Islamic militancy was promoted as an instrument of foreign policy in Afghanistan. This strengthened Islamic orthodoxy, sectarianism, and militant groups in Pakistan.

GENERAL ZIA: THE COLD WAR REDUX

The following excerpt is from General Zia's inaugural address to the Eighth Session of the Federal Council of Pakistan in 1983, after he had been in power for six years. The speech reflects his satisfaction that the country was peaceful. It also shows his personal religious beliefs, his reasons for attempting to enforce Islamic law, and his vision of democracy.

I have to compliment everybody for the prevalence of an atmosphere of amity and moderation. But it is an irony and a point to ponder as to why this observation should be made about our country. This is being mentioned regarding the Islamic Republic of Pakistan which we know as the citadel of Islam and a country created in the name of Islam and where for the last nearly seven years we have embarked upon a process of Islamisation. We have unitedly tried to establish Islam as a way of life. Therefore it is axiomatic that in our country religious unity should be a fact of life. We, in our country should be united like a phalanx, more so in the matter of religion so that outsiders should know that this country is so galvanised and united that no wedge can be driven and no cracks and fissures can be created. Please ponder over the fact that Pakistan has been achieved in the name of Islam. Islam enjoins upon its followers unity and brotherhood. Islam is a religion of peace. As the head of this Islamic country I want the people to know that complete peace and harmony prevailed during the recent [holy day] and that this should become a pattern for us in future. The demand of the time is that we should only concentrate on the measures for Islamising and for consolidating the country.

Islam stands for peace and preaches peace. Islam lays down clear principles for politics and statecraft. Politics is not a forbidden fruit. Politics with altruistic objectives is a prayer. Through such sanctified politics one can serve both religion and mundane interests. What place do the political parties have in an Islamic polity is a question which should be answered by the religious scholars. However on this question I will speak later. But I entreat everyone with all humility that Islam enjoins upon all its followers to forge unity and remain steadfast on the path of Allah. Islam expects of us that we will not fritter away

our energies through divisive ways. Within the Islamic polity there is hardly any scope for creating divisions in the name of politics. I fail to understand how formation of parties propagating an ideology other than Islam, can be permitted in an Islamic country.

You may create a platform in the name of Islam, Quran and Sunnah. But how is it permissible to form a party which should open its door only to such people who subscribe to a particular ideology (other than Islam). You may invoke Allah and His Prophet and spread the Message of God. You may undertake to serve the people. All this activity will be naturally legitimate. But in my opinion the country cannot brook the formation of parties and groups in the name of politics which instead of galvanising the Muslims should impair and undermine their unity.

To my thinking such negative attitude is antagonistic to the spirit of Islam as well as contrary to the democratic forms. In Islamic polity there is hardly any place for opposition for the sake of opposition. Islam is the path of golden mean and reason.

[General Zia-ul-Haq, *Islam Stands for Unity and Brotherhood* (Islamabad: Government of Pakistan, 1983), 5–6.]

THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN PAKISTAN

The women's rights movement in Pakistan can be traced back to the early years of Independence, and since 1947 the issues felt to be most pressing, in addition to the tactics and reactions thereto, have depended partly on the types of government in power. The following five selections offer legal, polemical, descriptive, and poetic windows into women's rights and concerns in the contexts of state policy, religion, and society.

THE MUSLIM FAMILY LAWS ORDINANCE, 1961

In the 1960s Pakistan, along with Tunisia, was regarded as a great exemplar of progressive modernity, as can be seen in the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance of 1961, the outcome of the report prepared by the Commission on Marriage and Family Law in 1955. This report, headed by Justice Abdur Rasheed, attempted to liberalize family law somewhat, and to safeguard the rights of women. For instance, while the commission did not outlaw either unilateral and arbitrary divorce by the husband or polygamy, it did mandate the oversight of an Arbitration Council, and the agreement of current wives in the case of a husband's remarriage. This report was passionately denounced by some Islamic clerics for what was perceived as an "anti-Islamic" character, but General Ayub Khan passed several of the report's recommendations into law in 1961. It has never been revoked.

Of its thirteen sections, numbers 5–9 are selected below.

5. REGISTRATION OF MARRIAGE

- (1) Every marriage solemnized under Muslim Law shall be registered in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance.
- (2) For the purpose of registration of marriage under this Ordinance, the Union Council shall grant licenses to one or more persons, to be called Nikah Registrars, but in no case shall more than one Nikah Registrar be licensed for any one Ward.
- (3) Every marriage not solemnized by the Nikah Registrar shall, for the purpose of registration under this Ordinance be reported to him by the person who has solemnized such marriage.
- (4) Whoever contravenes the provisions of sub-section (3) shall be punishable with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to three months, or with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees, or with both.
- (5) The form of nikahnama [marriage contract], the registers to be maintained by Nikah Registrars, the records to be preserved by Union Councils, the manner in which marriage shall be registered and copies of nikhanama shall be supplied to parties, and the fees to be charged thereof, shall be such as may be prescribed.
- (6) Any person may, on payment of the prescribed fee, if any, inspect at the office of the Union Council the record preserved under sub-section (5), or obtain a copy of any entry therein.

6. POLYGAMY

- (1) No man, during the subsistence of an existing marriage, shall except with the previous permission in writing of the Arbitration Council, contract another marriage, nor shall any such marriage contracted without such permission be registered under this Ordinance.
- (2) An application for permission under sub-section (1) shall be submitted to the Chairman in the prescribed manner together with the prescribed fee, and shall state reasons for the proposed marriage, and whether the consent of existing wife or wives has been obtained thereto.
- (3) On receipt of the application under sub-section (3), Chairman shall ask the applicant and his existing wife or wives each to nominate a representative, and the Arbitration Council so constituted may, if satisfied that the proposed marriage is necessary and just, grant, subject to such condition if any, as may be deemed fit, the permission applied for.
- (4) In deciding the application the Arbitration Council shall record its reasons for the decision and any party may, in the prescribed manner, within the prescribed period, and on payment of the prescribed fee, prefer an application for revision, to the Collector concerned and his decision shall be final and shall not be called in question in any Court.

- (5) Any man who contracts another marriage without the permission of the Arbitration Council shall,
 - (a) pay immediately the entire amount of the dower whether prompt or deferred, due to the existing wife or wives, which amount, if not so paid, shall be recoverable as arrears of land revenue; and
 - (b) on conviction upon complaint be punishable with the simple imprisonment which may extend to one year, or with fine which may extend to five thousand rupees, or with both.

7. TALAQ

- (1) Any man who wishes to divorce his wife shall, as soon as may be after the pronouncement of talaq ["I divorce you"—the formula of repudiation] in any form whatsoever, give the chairman a notice in writing of his having done so, and shall supply a copy thereof to the wife.
- (2) Whoever, contravenes the provisions of sub-section (1) shall be punishable with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine which may extend to five thousand rupees, or with both.
- (3) Save as provided in sub-section (5) talaq, unless revoked earlier, expressly or otherwise, shall not be effective until the expiration of ninety days from day on which notice under sub-section (1) is delivered to the Chairman.
- (4) Within thirty days of the receipt of notice under Sub-section (1), the Chairman shall constitute an Arbitration Council for the purpose of bringing about a reconciliation between the parties, and the Arbitration Council shall take all steps necessary to bring about such reconciliation.
- (5) If the wife be pregnant at the time talaq is pronounced, talaq shall not be effective until the period mentioned in sub-section (3) or the pregnancy, whichever later, ends.
- (6) Nothing shall debar a wife whose marriage has been terminated by talaq effective under this section from remarrying the same husband, without an intervening marriage with a third person, unless such termination is for the third time so effective.

8. DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE OTHERWISE THAN BY TALAQ

Where the right to divorce has been duly delegated to the wife and she wishes to exercise that right, or where any of the parties to a marriage wishes to dissolve the marriage otherwise than by talaq the provisions of section (7) shall, *mutatis mutandis* and so far as applicable, apply.

9. MAINTENANCE

- (1) If any husband fails to maintain his wife adequately, or where there are more wives than one, fails to maintain them equitably, the wife, or all or any of the wives, may in addition to seeking any other legal remedy available apply to the Chairman who shall constitute an Arbitration Council to determine the matter, and the Arbitration Council may issue a certificate specifying the amount which shall be paid as maintenance by the husband.
- (2) A husband or wife may, in the prescribed manner, within the prescribed period, and on payment of the prescribed fee, prefer an application for revision of the certificate, to the Collector concerned and his decision shall be final and shall not be called in question in any Court.
- (3) Any amount payable under sub-section (1) or (2) if, not paid in the due time, shall be recoverable as arrears of land revenue.

[From http://www.vakilnoi.com/saarclaw/Pakistan/muslim_family_laws_ordinance.htm]

ASMA JAHANGIR AND HINA GILANI: THE HUDOOD ORDINANCES,
1979, AND OPPOSITION BY WOMEN'S ACTIVISTS

The women's movement in Pakistan became more active and assertive during the days of General Zia ul-Haq, who attempted to legitimize his rule by building support among conservative and orthodox Islamic groups. Since these policies tended to reduce the rights of women and their role in society, women's movements proliferated. Later, a number of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) also came forward to advance the cause of women's rights and their place in the state system and society.

As evident in the selection below, by Asma Jahangir and Hina Gilani, the Hudood Ordinances and other measures adopted by the Zia government in the 1980s have been widely criticized as contentious and harmful to women's rights. In response to calls for their repeal or amendment, in 2006 the Women's Protection Bill—crafted by former attorney general Makhdoom Ali Khan and the chairman of the Council of Islamic Ideology, Muhammad Khalid Masud—was passed. This new bill brings rape under the Pakistan Penal Code, which is based on civil, not Sharia, law. This means that adultery and nonmarital consensual sex are still offenses, but now judges can try rape cases in criminal rather than Islamic courts, thus doing away with the need for the four witnesses and allowing convictions to be made on the basis of forensic and circumstantial evidence. Punishments for convicted extramarital sex (fornication) are now more lenient (imprisonment of up to five years and a fine of Rs. 10,000), and perpetrators of rape are punishable with ten to twenty-five years of imprisonment, or with death if the crime is particularly execrable. Adultery, however, remains under the jurisdiction of the Hudood Ordinances and is punishable with death by stoning.

Asma Jilani Jahangir (b. 1952) and her sister Hina Jilani (b. 1953) are human rights lawyer-activists who work in Pakistan to prevent the persecution of religious minorities, the abuse of women, and the exploitation of children. In 1980 they helped found the Women's Action Forum (WAF), whose mandate was to fight discriminatory legislation, such as the Proposed Law of Evidence, through which the value of a woman's testimony was reduced to half that of a man's, and the Hudood Ordinances, through which victims of rape had to prove their innocence (through the marshaling of four male witnesses to the rape) or else face punishment themselves. In 1986 Jahangir and Jilani set up a legal aid center in Lahore; in 1991 they established a shelter for women. Both sisters are founding members of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan.

The first laws introduced by Ziaul Haq in the process of Islamisation were the Hudood Ordinances. These laws remain controversial to this day. While many agree that the laws are far from perfect, few are willing to ask for their total repeal. . . .

The Hudood laws, promulgated in 1979 and enforced in 1980, are a collection of five criminal laws, collectively known as the Hudood Ordinances. The Offences against Property Ordinance deals with the crime of theft and armed robbery. The Offence of Zina Ordinance relates to the crime of rape, abduction, adultery and fornication. The word Zina covers adultery as well as fornication. The Offence of Qazf Ordinance relates to a false accusation of Zina. The Prohibition Order prohibits use of alcohol and narcotics. The last is the Execution of Punishment of Whipping Ordinance, which prescribes the mode of whipping for those convicted under the Hudood Ordinances.

The Hudood laws apply to Muslim and non-Muslim Pakistanis. Certain provisions of Hudood relating to prohibition of alcohol extend to non-Muslim foreigners as well.

Ostensibly, the Hudood Ordinances were promulgated to bring the criminal legal system of Pakistan in conformity with the injunctions of Islam. Hence, the forms of punishments recognised by Muslim jurists are introduced in the Ordinances. Two levels of punishment and, correspondingly, two separate sets of rules of evidence are prescribed. The first level or category is the one called the Hadd which literally means the "limit" and the other Tazir, which means "to punish." Hadd punishments are definitely fixed leaving no room for the judge to take account of mitigating or extenuating circumstances of the crime. Hadd for theft is amputation of a hand; for armed robbery it is amputation of a foot, or thirty whippings or death penalty according to specific circumstances enumerated in the law. For rape or Zina committed by adult married Muslims Hadd punishment is stoning to death; for adult non-Muslims and adult single Muslims it is 100 lashes. Hadd for committing Qazf and for drinking of alcohol (for Muslims alone) is eighty stripes. Tazir is simply a fall-back position from Hadd. For instance, lack of evidence for Hadd does not exonerate the accused of the criminal liability. The accused is still liable for Tazir. . . .

As long as Hadd remains a punishment, its application cannot be ruled out. It will be a hanging sword for those who remain ignorant of the law or are unable to get proper legal assistance. Even if it is not executed, a mere threat of its application can psychologically cripple anybody. Further, the Hadd sentences may be passed more frequently if political power is captured by fundamentalists. On the other hand, its abolition will be a clear message that the Pakistani society is largely averse to barbaric forms of punishment. Its reintroduction will not be easy.

Another example is the unacceptability of a female's evidence in awarding Hadd, particularly in rape, where the victim's own evidence has no value. A gang of men can thus rape all the residents of a women's hostel, but lack of ocular evidence of four Muslim males will rule out the imposition of a Hadd punishment. Rules of evidence for Hadd are illogical. Testimony of a Muslim female is totally unacceptable. Testimony of non-Muslims is allowed only where the accused is himself a non-Muslim. Non-Muslims should hope and pray for a non-Muslim to steal from them.

[Asma Jahangir and Hina Jilani, *The Hudood Ordinances: A Divine Sanction?* (Lahore: Rotas, 1990), 18, 23–24, 47, 49.]

FARIDA SHAHEED AND TAHMINA RASHID: WOMEN AND THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN PAKISTAN

The following two selections focus on contradictions in the status of women in Pakistan by highlighting the fact that some women have held important positions in the state system while the majority suffer from hardships and deprivations.

The first selection is by Farida Shaheed, a sociologist and women's rights activist, also a founding member of WAF, who in 2009 was named director of research at Shirkat Gah–Women's Resource Centre.

Pakistani women present a series of contrasts and paradoxes. Women have served as ambassadors since the 1950s; a woman has been elected Prime Minister, not once but twice; we have women pilots and bankers and chartered accountants, as well as internationally known human rights activists and artistes; the first woman to head a United Nations agency was a Pakistani (Nafisa Sadik who headed the UNFPA). Yet, in 2003, the statistical profile of Pakistani women is distressing. Only one out of three women and girls above 12 years entered the 21st century able to read and write. This means two out of every three women need another person's help for even the simplest tasks; reading a road sign to know where they are; filling out government forms to get an ID card or register as voters; understanding written instructions for administering medicine and warnings on pesticides. Every twenty minutes, one woman dies in childbirth, and related complications. . . . Though women directly contribute to household income in rural areas where they work in the fields and look after livestock as well as in urban areas, few receive [cash] in hand, fewer still are counted as employed

so that Pakistan's female labor force participation rate is one of the lowest in the world. . . . Then there are negative social customs and practices widespread enough for the Pakistan Commission on the Status of Women to comment in 1985 that "Women in general are dehumanized and exercise little control over either themselves or on affairs affecting their well being. They are treated as possessions rather than as self-reliant self-regulating humans. They are bought and sold, beaten and mutilated, even killed with impunity and social approval. They are dispossessed and disinherited in spite of legal safeguards. The vast majority are made to work for as long as sixteen to eighteen hours a day, without any payment, while the Quran even provides for the husband to pay the wife for nursing her own infant. Their status is based mostly on local customs."

[Farida Shaheed, "The Empowerment of Women: Pakistan's Paradoxical Record," in Abbas Rashid, ed., *Pakistan: Perspectives on State and Society* (Lahore: SAHE, 2004), 201–202.]

This second selection is by Tahmina Rashid, a Pakistani scholar based in Australia, whose work focuses on rural women in the Punjab, Pakistan.

Pakistan provided constitutional guarantee to women in all fields, including the political and economic rights enjoyed by men. However, in the absence of supportive informal moral codes and more formal structures, mere constitutional equality could not guarantee genuine legal, social, political and economic equality. Even if desired, the welfare of women could not become a priority due to strained resources and other compulsions which forced women to occupy a secondary category in the state hierarchy established by the policy makers. The meagre concessions given to women in Pakistan were in effect, confined to the elite while the underprivileged were denied rights on the basis of class as well as gender.

Throughout the history of Pakistan, regardless of their class, women were exploited in the name of custom and tradition, as well as religion. . . . In Pakistan, women's issues are generally interpreted and analysed either in the context of Islam or in relation to the state; and identities like class and location, and modes of female agency, have also been understood in relation to these categories. Recently, feminists have begun to attract academic inquiry in a broader context. Such views arise from a variety of stimuli, including a visible religious factor aided by the presence of powerful ecclesiastic groups, often enjoying official patronage and magnified in the past, especially during the regime of Zia-ul-Haq. Women belonging to the religious right, such as Jamaat-e-Islami and Deobandi activism in Pakistan, are disdainful of the idea of feminism in all its manifestations. In their opinion . . . Islam has already bestowed sufficient rights upon women and it is only necessary to implement these rights in a comprehensive Islamic setting.

[Tahmina Rashid, *Contested Representation: Punjabi Women in Feminist Debate in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2006), 122–123.]

KISHWAR NAHEED AND FAHMIDA RIAZ:
MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS, IN URDU POETRY

Kishwar Naheed (b. 1940) and Fahmida Riaz (b. 1946) are well-known feminist Pakistani poets, both of whom migrated from India to Pakistan after Partition and Independence, and espouse leftist, liberal causes. Riaz spent seven years in India after the threat of imprisonment in Pakistan for her views; disillusioned by the rise of Hindu nationalism, she returned to Pakistan on the eve of Benazir Bhutto's wedding, in 1987. In powerful writing that evokes the pathos of women's situations and struggles, Riaz and Naheed depict both the changes wrought in domestic life over the past six to seven decades in Pakistan, and the ways in which male dominance still remains a challenge for Pakistani women.

In the poems selected for inclusion here, both poets write as if from a mother to her daughter.

INSIGHT

We grew up inside a cabin
Whose crooked walls were carved
Into a thousand angles;
Whose rafters bent low, like
My mother's back
Whose door would hardly open or close
Without sesame oil;
And whose gates mirrored a thousand openings.
Yet the cabin,
Too small even to house the wind,
Housed our growth.
Our mother would bake bread, one child
In her stomach, one lounging in her lap.
No complaint fell from her lips.
I myself am a mother
But my darling ones
Were nurtured in the warmth of a nurse's lap.
My life is easy, ordering
Breakfast from the bakery, all my needs
From the bazaar.
I know
If, like my mother's, my back were bent
No one would help,
No one would recite prayers at the shrine of a mother's love.
All relations are bound by interest:
A mother's love and affection are nothing;

Your love and my love is
Nothing.

[Kishwar Naheed, "Insight," from M. A. R. Habib, ed.,
An Anthology of Modern Urdu Poetry (New York:
Modern Language Association of America, 2003), 175–177.]

LULLABY

...

I remember that night
When you were born

That night was very dark
Labor tormented with pain
But upon hearing your cry a candlewick was set to light

Your beautiful beautiful limbs
Fresh, fresh, healthy and prospering,
Dearest can't manage to kiss you
Dearest from shaking and shivering

I know a wolf is stood on my doorway
Drinking my blood, consuming my youth
Wolf nourished by money
One who rules the world
Cursing us from age to age

Because of whom in this world
Thinking is considered a crime
To love—a major sin

He has tasted the blood of a human spirit
Now watching your every move

Dearest cannot sleep at night
Dearest I am constantly awake

Dearest borne of my womb listen
This world is one of injustice
What skills can I teach you?

Women who came and went
Embroidering sprigs on net upon net

Filling platter upon platter
Which the world ate

Today every kitchen is empty
What can I show you
What skill can I teach you!

Whenever I take you in my arms
I hear the call of time
I hear great battlecries
I hear the call to war
I hear this again and again
Your skill is "bravery"!

Listen my dear little one
This earth, this sky
All the grandeur of peace
The markets full of grain

Until that is . . . ours
We cannot live in peace
Not supported by anyone
There is no other solution

Do not fear the wolf
Dear heart! Fight with conviction
Do not even despair

I will teach you bravery
Turn you into a lioness
Fear will not lurk near you

Listen my dear new little one
You will not be alone
Your friends will be by your side

Your companions, your friends
Will be with you at every step
Many hands will be held together
This is my wish.

[Fahmida Riaz, "Lullaby," in Amina Yaqin, "Issues of Translation:
Three Contemporary Urdu Poems," *SOAS Literary Review*,
Internet publication (1999).]

1988–1999: RESTORATION OF CIVILIAN RULE

The death of General Zia ul-Haq in an air crash in August 1988 ushered in an era of political civilian-elected governance. However, the military top brass exercised influence on key policy issues from the sidelines. There were four elected governments—two each formed by Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif—and three interim governments for holding general elections. Four general elections were held during this period—in 1988, 1990, 1993, and 1997. No civilian government completed the full term of five years.

Benazir Bhutto (1953–2007), head of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), assumed the office of prime minister in December 1988, to become the first woman prime minister in an Islamic state. Her government was dismissed in August 1990 by the president, with the support of the army chief. Nawaz Sharif (b. 1949), of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML), became prime minister in October 1990, and his government was removed by the president in April 1993, although the Supreme Court restored it in May. As the conflict between the president and Nawaz Sharif intensified, the army chief forced both to resign in July 1993. After the elections, Benazir Bhutto returned to power in October 1993, but she was dismissed from office in November 1996 by the president, with the blessings of the army chief. Nawaz Sharif was reelected in February 1997. His government was dislodged in a coup led by General Pervez Musharraf in October 1999.

BENAZIR BHUTTO: THE RETURN TO DEMOCRACY

The following excerpt from Benazir Bhutto's book provides her narrative of the problems she faced on the way to becoming prime minister in December 1988. Note that her government saw no change in the status of women, and she seems to have forgotten her own father's role in the increasing Islamization of the state; she places the responsibility solely in Zia's hands.

The alliance between elements of the Pakistani military and religious political parties began before the Zia years but reached its zenith under his dictatorship. . . . Zia's death and the end of the Afghan war coincided; both threatened the ISI [Inter-Services Intelligence]–Jamaat lock on political power in Pakistan. This power arrangement was cemented under the formation of the Pakistan Muslim League. The party was composed of political leaders groomed and funded by the ISI, which functioned in tandem with the Jamaat-i-Islami. . . . The intelligence agencies assembled a coalition of seven Islamist parties around the Pakistan Muslim League to run against the Pakistan Peoples Party in the [1988] National Assembly elections. This ISI-created political chimera was called the Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI) (Islamic Democratic Alliance). . . .

Having failed to stop the PPP from winning a parliamentary majority, the ISI now began plotting to dismember the PPP. Makhdoom Amin Fahim of the PPP was met by General Hamid Gul, the head of the ISI. Makhdoom was asked to defect and told that if he could bring ten members of parliament with him, he would be made prime minister of Pakistan. He refused.

Despite the two-to-one victory of the PPP over the IJI for the National Assembly, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan defied the parliamentary norm of inviting the leader of the winning party in a parliamentary democracy to form a government. Instead he called different leaders to see if he could cobble together a coalition government with the support of small parties and independents. But since the PPP had an outright majority, he could not. After dillydallying with coalition building for fifteen days, he was forced to call on me to form the government. However, during this critical fifteen-day lapse, the enemies of democracy contrived an outcome in the powerful Punjabi Provincial Assembly that manipulated the vote to allow for an ISI-IJI majority (Nawaz Sharif, a Zia protégé with Islamist leanings, was made the chief minister). Despite all the odds, on December 2, 1988, I was sworn in as the democratically elected prime minister of Pakistan, the first woman in history elected to head an Islamic state. This was the moment of democracy, the moment to honor all who had come before, who had given their lives or been tortured and lashed and exiled while fighting for freedom.

[Benazir Bhutto, *Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy, and the West* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2008), 194, 195, 197–198.]

PRIME MINISTER NAWAZ SHARIF: NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS

India's decision to explode five nuclear devices on May 11 and 13, 1998 (see chapter 8), confronted Pakistan with a choice: should it conduct similar tests to demonstrate its nuclear weapon capability, or hold back? There was intense discussion and debate among Pakistan's civilian leaders, military top brass, and citizens in general, on how to respond to the Indian nuclear explosion. This debate ended with a consensus in favor of immediate nuclear testing. On May 28 and 30, 1998, Pakistan tested six nuclear devices. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif announced on May 28 that Pakistan had also completed successful nuclear tests.

My dear countrymen: Peace be unto you. . . . Today, God the great has bestowed us with the courage and determination to make a decision to take a defensive step. . . . Today we have fully settled the account of the nuclear tests conducted by India recently and have carried out five successful nuclear tests. . . . Sanctions will be imposed. Hard and difficult times will come. . . . By the grace of God, our troops are imbued with the spirit of faith in God and are ready to face the enemy. . . . Our nuclear scientists and technicians too, by the

grace of God, are endowed with divine capabilities. . . . We had deprived ourselves of our self-reliance by seeking loans from others. Now we will not look at any outsider. . . . We will depend on our own strength and will seek help only from God.

[Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, BBC News, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/monitoring/102445.stm>.]

1999–2008: THE MILITARY RULE OF GENERAL PERVEZ MUSHARRAF AND ITS LATER CIVILIANIZATION

Pakistan's civilian democracy (1988–1999) came to an end when the army dislodged Nawaz Sharif's government and assumed power on October 12, 1999. This was Pakistan's fourth military takeover; it lasted until General Pervez Musharraf civilianized his rule in October–November 2002.

On October 12, 1999, army chief General Pervez Musharraf was flying back from Colombo, Sri Lanka, to Karachi. Before his aircraft landed, the then-prime minister Nawaz Sharif removed him from the command of the army and appointed his own preferred general to this position. The pilot of the aircraft carrying Pervez Musharraf was directed by Pakistan's Civil Aviation Authority not to land in Karachi. On learning of this, the Army Corps Commander, in Karachi, used his troops to take control of the airport, making it possible for Musharraf's aircraft to land there. Meanwhile other top brass in Rawalpindi arrested Nawaz Sharif and dismissed his government. General Musharraf then took over as the chief executive and suspended the Constitution.

Nawaz Sharif was put on trial and convicted in 2000 for "hijacking" the aircraft carrying General Musharraf and other passengers. In December 2000, under an arrangement with the government of Saudi Arabia, President Pervez Musharraf remitted Nawaz Sharif's sentence and allowed him to leave for Saudi Arabia, where he was supposed to stay for ten years.

General Pervez Musharraf civilianized his military rule by taking measured steps on the pattern of General Zia ul-Haq and Field Marshal Ayub Khan. These steps were a referendum for getting himself elected president for five years (April 2002); changes in the Constitution to strengthen his role as the president (August); carefully managed general elections (October); co-optation of a section of the political elite, and installation of a pliant prime minister (November); and full restoration of the Constitution (February 2003).

In October 2007 Musharraf got himself reelected for a second term despite a countrywide protest against him that was sparked by his attempt to remove Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, chief justice of the Supreme Court, in March 2007. His political situation became more precarious when lawyers and others continued the agitation, and especially once Benazir Bhutto (October 2007)

and Nawaz Sharif (November 2007) had both returned to Pakistan. Musharraf attempted to restore his political fortune by suspending the Constitution, imposing a state of emergency, and removing more than sixty judges of the High and Supreme Courts, including the chief justice. However, this only triggered more protests. He restored the Constitution on December 15, 2007, by making unilateral changes in it which were rejected by all political parties. In the February 2008 general elections, his loyalist party, the Pakistan Muslim League—Quaid-i-Azam (PML-Q), in power since 2002, lost badly, and two of his main rival parties—the PPP and the Pakistan Muslim League—Nawaz (PML-N)—emerged as the two leading political parties.

PRESIDENT PERVEZ MUSHARRAF: A GENERAL REFLECTS

In his English-language autobiography *In the Line of Fire*, General Pervez Musharraf explains the political and economic situation at the time of the takeover, and outlines the goals of his military government.

I have no hesitation in admitting that initially I was quite overawed by what I had gotten into. My special worry was my utter lack of knowledge of economics and finance. I decided to learn on the job through anyone and everyone by asking questions unabashedly. In any case what I soon realized was that none of this was rocket science. Every educated, sensitive Pakistani was well aware of the country's problems. It did not take me long to identify the maladies and work out remedies.

Our economy was shattered, and we were on the verge of bankruptcy. For years, our leaders had avoided any institutional checks and had misgoverned the nation with impunity. Corruption and nepotism were all too common. All government institutions and organizations and public-sector corporations had fallen prey to the most blatant corruption, facilitated at the highest levels of government, through the appointment of inept managers and directors. Corruption had permeated effectively down from the top. . . .

Financial corruption aside, the government was rife with nepotism and incompetence. There was no strategic direction coming from the top. Nowhere, in any ministry, institution, organization, or department, did I see any clear vision or strategy. Pakistan was like a rudderless ship floundering in high seas, with no destination, led by inept captains whose only talent lay in plunder. . . . All social indicators—health, education, income—were shamefully low and were continually deteriorating. Between 1988–1999 absolute poverty—people who earn \$1 per day or less—had risen alarmingly, from 18 percent to 34 percent. . . .

I took over in extremely unusual circumstances, not of my making. It is unbelievable and indeed unfortunate that the few at the helm of affairs in the last gov-

ernment were intriguing to destroy the last institution of stability left in Pakistan by creating dissension in the ranks of the armed forces of Pakistan. And who would believe that the chief of the army staff, having represented Pakistan in Sri Lanka, upon his return was denied landing in his own country and instead circumstances were created which would have forced our plane to either land in India or crash. . . .

I set myself a seven-point agenda. Some of these points, by their very nature, required so much time to implement that I knew that the best I could do was to start the process and take it to a stage where it could not be reversed. Those seven points were: (1) rebuild national confidence and morale. (2) Strengthen the federation, remove inter-provincial disharmony, and restore national cohesion. (3) Revive the economy and restore investors' confidence. (4) Ensure law and order and dispense speedy justice. (5) Depoliticize state institutions. (6) Devolve power down to the grass roots. (7) Ensure swift accountability.

[Pervez Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire: A Memoir* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2006), 146, 148–150.]

PRESIDENT PERVEZ MUSHARRAF: THE SYMBIOSIS OF RELIGION AND TERRORISM

Religious extremism and terrorism have emerged as the most serious challenge to the state and the international system, in the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001. General Pervez Musharraf described this as the symbiosis of religion and terror, a symbiosis that caused his regime its greatest political challenge. For he was forced to respond both to the United States, which wanted him to stand with the West against terrorists, and to some important groups in Pakistan that approved both of the Taliban, a nationalist group focused on Afghan goals, and of the transnational al-Qaeda, with its commitment to international jihad. Musharraf certainly believed that Islam was a necessary component of a good society in Pakistan. What troubled him was that in Pakistan Islam and violence had coalesced in a way that threatened the country's peace and stability. His regime unfortunately took little advantage of the opportunity provided by the infusion of American money following 9/11—Pakistan experienced no real economic gains, nor did it show improvements in social justice.

Several times in the quiet of the night, sitting alone in my study, I have pondered over what has happened to Pakistan. What has caused the deterioration our national fabric? We were once a perfectly normal, religiously harmonious society, with only occasional tension between the Sunni and Shia sects of our religion. How did we reach the present-day epidemic of terrorism and extremism?

The trauma started in 1979 with the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union. . . . We suddenly realized that we were faced with a two-front threat—India from the east and the Soviet Union and its Afghan puppet from the west. The nation and the military were in a quandary. Fortunately for us, the West,

led by the United States after the election of Ronald Reagan, considered Afghanistan an important arena in which to check the Soviet ambitions. A jihad [just war] was launched in Afghanistan, with Pakistan as the inevitable conduit. Afghan warlords and their militias were armed and financed to fight the Soviets. Alongside 20,000 to 30,000 mujahideen from all over the Islamic world, students from some seminaries [madrasahs] were encouraged, armed, financed and trained. Before 1979, our madrasahs were quite limited and their activities were insignificant. The Afghan war brought them into the forefront, urged on by President Zia ul-Haq who vigorously propounded the cause of jihad against the Soviet occupation [of Afghanistan].

The entire decade of the 1980s saw religious extremism rise, encouraged by Zia. It is undeniable that the hard-line mullahs of the Frontier province were the obvious partners of this jihad. . . . Zia for his own personal and political reasons embraced the hard-line religious lobby as his constituency throughout Pakistan and well beyond, to the exclusion of the huge majority of moderate Pakistanis. Fighting the infidel Soviet Army became a holy cause to the jihadis, and countless Pakistani men signed up.

This jihad continued for ten years, until the Soviets were defeated in 1989. They withdrew in a hurry, leaving behind an enormous arsenal of heavy weapons that included tanks guns and even aircraft, with abundant stocks of ammunition. The United States and Europe were also quick to abandon the area, as the Berlin Wall fell and the Soviet threat diminished. The sudden vacuum in Afghanistan led first to the toppling of the puppet government that had been installed by the Soviet Union, and then to mayhem and bloodletting among warlords, jostling for power.

The effect of this upheaval was threefold. First, it brought 4 million refugees into Pakistan. Second, it sparked the emergence of the Taliban. Third, it led to the coalescing of the international mujahideen into al Qaeda.

Then came 9/11. Even before Secretary of State Colin Powell called me to ask for help, even before President Bush announced in a public speech that all nations were either "with us or against us," I knew that Pakistan was at a cross-road. Here was an opportunity for us to get rid of [religious] terrorism in our midst in our own national interest. . . . Yet after the United State's angry invasion of Afghanistan and the continuing turbulence there, many al Qaeda operatives shifted to the cities and western mountains of Pakistan. Our situation . . . had worsened.

As if this were not enough, the struggle for freedom that erupted in India-held Kashmir in 1989 had a major impact on Pakistani society. . . . The Indian law enforcement agencies were ruthless in crushing the movement for freedom. . . . The Pakistani people are emotionally and sentimentally attached to their Kashmiri brethren. Dozens of support groups sprang up all over the country, prepared to join the jihad against the Indian army.

For twenty-six years now on our western borders, and for sixteen years to our east in Kashmir, we have been in turmoil. A culture of militancy, weapons, and

drugs now flourishes in Pakistan. A deadly al Qaeda network entrenched itself in our major cities and the mountains of our tribal agencies on our western border with Afghanistan. A culture of targeted killings, explosives, car bomb and suicide attacks took root. . . .

At our core, the people of Pakistan are religious and moderate. Pakistan is an Islamic state created for the Muslims of the subcontinent. Only a small fringe of the population is extremist. This fringe holds rigid, orthodox, even obscurantist and intolerant views about religion. A problem arises when it wants to impose its rigid, dogmatic views on others. . . .

The vast mass of less literate poor people of Pakistan liv[e] largely in rural areas and semiurban areas. They too are moderates who adhere to a philosophy of "live and let live" . . . but because of their illiteracy, poverty and desperation, the extremists try to recruit them and often succeed. . . .

However, there are extremists in our midst who are neither poor nor uneducated. What moulds them? I believe it is their revulsion at the sheer pathos of the Muslim condition: the political injustices, societal deprivation, and alienation that reduced many Muslims to marginalization and exploitation. This accounts for the likes of Osama bin Laden. . . .

Our experience has taught us that foreigners in al Qaeda have almost invariably masterminded terrorist attacks in Pakistan. The planners penetrate into bands of religious extremist organizations or they indoctrinate groups of selected fanatics. . . . Such attackers are mere pawns. They are not always religiously motivated, yet this is how terrorism in Pakistan has been mixed with religion. . . .

Ultimate success will only come when the roots that cause terrorism are destroyed; that is, when injustices against Muslims are removed. This lies in the hands of the West, particularly America. Dealing with extremism requires prudence.

[Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire*, 274–276, 277–278, 280.]

EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

Predating General Musharraf's presidency, but continuing through it and beyond, is the recognition of a crisis in education. In Pakistan there is a unanimous opinion that education plays a critical role in building a viable economy, as the key to scientific and technological advancement and human capital formation. However, education has remained neglected. The quality of education has generally declined in state-managed educational institutions at all levels, mainly because of a paucity of financial resources, a lack of facilities, a shortage of qualified teachers, and an overall neglect of education on the part of the state and society.

Public expenditure on education as a percentage of Pakistan's GDP is very low. The official data showed the education–GDP ratio as 2 percent in 2009. In

that same year the literacy rate of those aged ten or above was 69 percent for males and 45 percent for females.

Private-sector educational institutions from primary school-level to university claim to offer better-quality education. However, high tuition fees and related expenses make it extremely difficult for the majority of people to send their children to these institutions.

SHAHID JAVED BURKI: CAUSES FOR A DETERIORATING EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The following selection by Shahid Javed Burki (b. 1938) outlines the major causes of the decline of education in Pakistan. Burki is a former federal finance minister of Pakistan who served at the World Bank for twenty-five years and is the author of many books and articles on Pakistan.

The Pakistani educational system collapsed slowly; at times its progressive deterioration was not even noticed by the people who later were to be most seriously affected by it. The collapse occurred for basically four reasons. The first jolt was given in the early 1970s by the government headed by Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Bhutto decided to nationalize private schools, in particular those run by various Christian missionary orders. His motive was simple. He was of the view that private school encouraged elitism in the society whereas he wanted equality and equal opportunity for all.

Bhutto was also responsible for delivering the system the second shock, and this time the motive was political expediency. His rise to political power was viewed with great apprehension by the religious forces in the country. They considered the socialism Bhutto espoused as “godless” and were determined to prevent him and the Pakistan People’s Party founded by him from gaining ground. The two sides—Bhutto and the Islamists—chose to use the college and university campuses to fight the battle for the control of the political mind in the country. Both sought to mobilize the student population by establishing student organizations representative of their different points of view. . . .

The third development to turn the system of education dysfunctional occurred in the 1980s when a coalition led by the United States and including Pakistan and Saudi Arabia decided to use the seminaries as training grounds for the *mujahideen* who were being instructed to battle the Soviet Union’s troops occupying Afghanistan. There was an unspoken understanding about their respective roles among these three partners. . . . Pakistan was able to further its influence in Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia was able to introduce its extremely conservative interpretation of Islam into a large Muslim country that had hitherto subscribed to a relatively liberal, accommodating, assimilative form of the religion.

The fourth unhappy development to affect the sector of education was the political confusion that prevailed in the country for more than a decade, from the time of the death of President Zia-ul-Haq in August 1988 to the return of the military under General Pervez Musharraf in October 1999. In this period four elected governments and three interim administrations governed the country. Preoccupied with prolonging their stay [in office], the elected governments paid little attention to economic development in general and social development in particular. Under the watch of these administrations, public sector education deteriorated significantly.

[Shahid Javed Burki, "Educating the Pakistani Masses,"
in Robert M. Hathaway, ed., *Education Reform in Pakistan:
Building for the Future* (Washington, DC: Woodrow
Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2005), 22–23.]

USMAN ALI ISANI AND LATIF VIRK:

EDUCATION AT ALL LEVELS: THE NATIONAL REPORTS

Mahbub ul-Haq (quoted above on the "Twenty-Two Families")—one of Pakistan's best-known economists and a former federal finance minister—contributed to the development of the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) along with Amartya Sen, quoted in chapter 8. Mahbub ul-Haq frequently stressed the connection between poverty, ill-health, lack of education, and failed economic development. This perspective is reflected in the reports on education prepared by the government of Pakistan. In 2011 the government-established Pakistan Education Task Force reported that at least seven million children were not in primary school and that 10 percent of the world's primary school-age children who do not attend school live in Pakistan.

Some of these reports and policies have been examined by two authors who have held influential positions in the educational establishment: Usman Ali Isani, a senior Pakistani bureaucrat and educationist, currently serving as vice chancellor for Iqra University, Islamabad; and Latif Virk, a sociologist at the National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences. Their analysis of the reports shows the continuing emphasis on three issues in education at all levels: an inculcation of the centrality of Islam; a concern for national unity; and a recognition that education is fundamental for economic prosperity. Despite these high goals and repeated promises, they maintain that education has remained neglected and the declared goals have not been achieved.

In 1947, at the First Educational Conference, the educational philosophy incorporated both the fundamentals of Islamic tradition and modern science and technology but did not elaborate much on the purpose of education. The Commission on National Education in 1959, however, carried out a comprehensive

analysis of the educational philosophy. Among other issues the Commission identified the following purposes of education. . . . Education should provide opportunity for the development of skills of the people, training of a leadership group and promotion of vocational abilities; all of which are essential for the creation of a progressive and democratic society. . . . Education must play a fundamental part in the preservation of the ideals which led to the creation of Pakistan, strengthening the concept of it as a united nation, and striving to preserve the Islamic way of life; and education should inculcate in the people the Islamic principles of truth, justice, benevolence and universal brotherhood. With regard to Islam, the following paragraph of the Report is significant: Islam teaches honesty in thought, in deed, and in purpose. It lays emphasis on social justice and active participation in the removal of distress and poverty. In short, it seeks the identity of those who know, with those who do not know; of those who have, with those who do not have; of those who are powerful, with those who have no power. . . . Education is a public investment and this should be used [as] a vehicle for creating a welfare state. . . .

The purposes of higher education are multi-dimensional and may be termed as personal, social, economic, and cultural. In the context of Pakistan, it has ideological meanings attached to its purposes as well. Pakistan as an ideological state cannot ignore its ideological moorings [and] the needs of modern society for building a competitive nation whose individuals are scientifically trained persons. . . . Thus the purpose of higher education must be: a) the inculcation of Islamic theology and moral values; b) preservation of our religious and cultural heritage; and c) equip the individuals with the latest knowledge and technology. . . . Education and particularly higher education cannot be divorced from its milieu and social context. . . .

At the beginning of the 21st century, where there is so much growth of knowledge no nation can be content without higher education. . . . The global truth that higher education is a matter of long-term survival has not yet been honoured in Pakistan.

[U. A. G. Isani and Mohammad Latif Virk, *Higher Education in Pakistan: A Historical and Futuristic Perspective* (Islamabad: National Book Foundation, 2005), 12, 18–19.]

PERVEZ HOODBHOY: RELIGION, SCIENCE, AND EDUCATION: THE BATTLE FOR RATIONALITY

Pervez Hoodbhoy (b. 1950), professor of physics at Quaid-i-Azam University, a strong supporter of peaceful uses of nuclear technology, and an environmental and social activist, is an outspoken critic of the treatment of education by successive governments. In his 1991 book *Islam and Science* he is particularly critical of General Zia ul-Haq's plans to Islamicize all education. He argues that an excessively narrow inter-

pretation of Islam, rather than Islam itself, has prevented Pakistan and other Muslim states from becoming strong and modern.

There are, on paper, 133 science and technology institutions in Pakistan. . . . Equipment is generally plentiful, salaries are 30–50% higher than in neighbouring India, and perks such as foreign travel are common. The organizations maintain public relations offices, have good access to the state media, send employees for overseas training, and organize conferences all year round. On the face of it these are signs of busy, productive, and effective activity. But, with some exceptions, their scientific research output is minuscule by any reasonable standard, and the impact on the technology that exists or the national economy imperceptible. . . .

Many causes are commonly attributed to the ineffectiveness of Pakistani research and development organizations. The principal among these is an open door import policy enforced by foreign aid agencies which discourages the indigenization of technology and forestalls any increase in the tiny numbers of highly skilled scientists and engineers. The validity of this last point can be gauged from seeing that the total number of Ph.D.'s throughout the country in natural sciences and engineering is only about 1,000. The corresponding number in India is estimated to lie between 70,000 and 80,000. Given that per capita income in Pakistan (\$350) and India (\$300) are not so very different, the huge discrepancy in levels of scientific attainment must be sought elsewhere. The explanation lies in education. . . .

Scientific research and development—and hence the growth or decay of science as an institution in society—are inescapably connected with education. In fact, the ultimate expression of the philosophy to which a society subscribes is to be found in the manner by which it educates its young. It is here where one faces squarely the question of whether education should be a means of transforming and modernizing society, or whether it should principally seek to conserve tradition. . . . A recent report of the World Bank gives an accurate, but gloomy, picture:

The unusually low educational attainments of Pakistan's rapidly growing population, particularly the female population, will become a serious impediment to the country's long-term development. The weak human resources base on which Pakistan's economic development is being built endangers its long-term growth prospects and negatively affects the distributional benefits to be derived from such growth.

Seventy-five million Pakistanis can neither read nor write. Pakistan government figures put the average (both sexes) literacy rate at 26 per cent, and the female literacy rate at only 15 per cent (1991). While these figures are low even

by Third World standards, the actual situation is probably considerably worse. Independent sources estimate that the true figures may be 30–40 per cent lower than stated. . . .

No government in Pakistan, whether democratic or military, has ever given education any reasonable status in the list of national priorities. But the military regime of General Zia stands out particularly. A damning indictment of this regime's [Zia's] achievements in the field of education is to be found in a report by a US research concern, which was given a contract in 1986 by the government to analyse the state of education in Pakistan. The report concludes that:

Most dramatic was the difference between the projections of the 5th five year plan and actual performance during this period (1978–83) which fell over 50% below the planned level and represented the lowest level of national effort in support of education in the independent nation's history.

In earlier periods of Pakistan's history, such low levels of attainment in education have been admitted with quiet shame, but the objectives of education were tacitly taken to be essentially universal, modernistic ones. However, following the coup of 1977 which brought General Zia-ul-Haq to power, the military government, in alliance with political parties of fundamentalist orientation, declared its intention of creating an Islamized society and a new national identity based exclusively on religion. Education immediately became a key instrument to be used towards this end. Consequently, a number of important changes were officially decreed. These included the following: the imposition of the chadar [head covering] for female students in educational institutions; introduction of *nazra* (reading of Qur'an) as a matriculation requirement; . . . the recognition of *madrasah* certificates as equivalent to master's degrees; . . . the grant of 20 extra marks for those applicants to engineering universities who have memorized the Qur'an; . . . introduction of religious knowledge as a criterion for selecting teachers of science and non-science subjects; [and] revision of conventional subjects to emphasize Islamic values.

[Pervez Hoodbhoy, *Islam and Science: Religious Orthodoxy and the Battle for Rationality* (London: Zed Books, 1991), 35–37.]

A. H. NAYYAR: RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS AS ALTERNATIVES: THE MADRASA ISSUE

Pakistan has three kinds of educational institutions. The first is government schools and colleges, which use Urdu or a regional language as a medium of instruction, have very minimal fees, and cater to the majority of students. Then there are private, usually English-language, institutions, which range in level from kindergarten through universities and professional schools, which charge very high fees, and where admission is much sought after.

The third kind includes religious schools of many varieties, collectively called *madrasas*, which focus on traditional Islamic education. These *madrasas* range from small institutions that teach *Qur*anic reading and basic Islam to children, to formally structured institutions for religious education based primarily on the famous nineteenth-century “*Dars-e Nizami*” curriculum. Some of these *madrasas* issue formal degrees and certificates, but with some exceptions these degrees are not accepted for government jobs. These institutions have minimal tuition fees, and provide free board and lodging to their students. Such institutions are financed through charity, voluntary donations (local and foreign), and endowment income. Only a small number of *madrasas* accept government funding.

Students in such *madrasas* are taught to defend Islam against those attempting to undermine it or to attack Muslim lands. A. H. Nayyar (b. 1945)—a modernist scholar-academician and researcher on social issues whose 2003 report for the Sustainable Development Policy Institute on textbook content in Pakistan’s mainstream public school system eventually led to the government’s revision of school curricula and textbooks—has also focused on *madrasa* education. Here he provides a useful discussion of the *madrasas* of Pakistan and their place in Islamic society. See also General Musharraf’s account below about religion and terrorism; many people are proud of those students from Pakistani *madrasas* who fought for Islam in Afghanistan against Americans, and in Kashmir against Indians.

1. RESURGENCE OF MADRASAHs

The decline of the vast Muslim empire [in India], the occupation of the land by foreign forces, particularly the defeat at the hands of these forces in the 1857 war of independence, the onslaught of the Christian missionaries, introduction of a different educational system by the colonial power, and the failure of the Muslim population in general to accept the available alternative (and hence to be accepted in the employment of the colonial power) forced a large section of Indian Muslims to fortify their religious identity. This led to a new wave of *madrasahs* in the second half of the [nineteenth century], many of which piloted a new movement for Islamic education, and which proved standard-bearers of the present-day *madrasah*. The great names in this category were Darul Uloom Deoband (established in 1867), Nadwatul Ulema Lucknow (established in 1894), Darul Uloom Mazahirul Uloom, Saharanpur (established in 1898). . . . They were distinguished from the earlier *madrasahs* by the mode of teaching, organization, regularization of the curriculum, introduction of a system of examinations on the pattern of the British system, and a system of awarding formal certificates and degrees.

What stands out as a distinguishing characteristic of the *madrasahs* established in the later half of the nineteenth century is that they were conceived to be free of obligation to the state. The earlier schools had almost always had state endowments in the form of land grants to sustain the teachers and students, as

well as for books and other essentials. The founders of Darul Uloom Deoband introduced the practice of running their institution on community funds, collected in person by teachers and students, either in cash or kind, with great humility. For them this practice meant several things. Besides freeing them from the whims of rajas, nawabs, or governments, it brought into the community a sense of participation in the process, and instilled in both the teachers and the taught a sense of obligation towards the people, rather than towards any rich benefactor. The founders of madrasahs were strongly anti-imperialist, and communicated this spirit to their students. Many of the founders were in the forefront of the independence movement and had a nationalistic political outlook. They viewed the imperialism of the West more as that of Christendom, and the modern technology brought in by the imperialists as a tool in the hands of an adversarial religious force. As such, they remained strongly opposed to modern ideas produced in the West. This attitude has not changed since then. In this respect, Deoband is rightly called the fountainhead of the present Sunni madrasahs.

2. MADRASAHS IN PAKISTAN

The Afghan war provided a different kind of opportunity to the religious parties. Millions of Afghan refugees in Pakistan provided fertile ground for expansion in madrasah education. Supported by the USA, Saudi Arabia, and the Persian Gulf states, and aided logistically by the Pakistani military agencies, religious parties with madrasahs got their cadres trained and battle-hardened. The Taliban are truly a madrasah phenomenon. They consist of Afghan refugees who rose from the Deobandi madrasahs in the provinces of Balochistan and the NWFP, and, allegedly supported by Pakistani state institutions, have now become a major factor in the fratricidal war of Afghanistan. The madrasahs also hosted fellow mujahideen from various Islamic countries, providing an opportunity for fostering a truly international link for the "holy cause." This, in fact, ushered in a new phase in the politics of religious parties. They were now ready to fight for Islam anywhere on the globe, be it in Afghanistan, Kashmir, Bosnia, Tajikistan, Algeria, Chechnya, Philippines, or with the Uighur people in the Xinjiang province of China. The posture was never so militant, and the century-old dream of Pan-Islamism was never so realizable. After Ramzi Yusuf, an accused in the World Trade Centre bombing case in the USA, was arrested from Islamabad and was found to have been associated with the International Islamic University, the Minister of Interior in Benazir Bhutto's government openly charged that the University had become a hideout of international Islamic terrorists. . . .

The madrasahs have, not surprisingly, become a source of hate-filled propaganda against other sects and the sectarian divide has become sharper and more violent. Complete suppression of Ahmedis has become an article of faith with all the sects. The Shi'as, a minority in Pakistan, organized themselves to

safeguard their religious rights following Ziaul Haq's Islamization policies. The Iranian revolution of Imam Khomeini was their source of strength. They turned militant after dozens of them died in bloody clashes with the police in 1985. Both Shi'a and Sunni madrasahs have since become a breeding ground of militants to fight against each other. Shi'a militant wings Sipah-e-Mohammad [the Army of Muhammad] and Sipah-e-Abbas [the Army of Abbas] were formed to combat the Sunni SSP [Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan, Army of the Friends of the Prophet]. All the organizations are heavily armed and are believed to be generously funded by Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States and Iran respectively.

To conclude: the failure of the Pakistani state to provide adequate opportunities for education to all is the principal cause creating those objective conditions which have led to the rapid rise of the madrasah system. It will be crucial to undo these conditions because the mindset created by this system is extremely divisive and will destroy the social fabric by fanning sectarian hatred. The state must exercise control on the content of madrasah education, against the resistance of the ulema if necessary, if it wishes to avoid a situation of civil war in the future. However, it must be realized that this will be only partially effective. In the final analysis, improvements in the mainstream system of education alone can make madrasah education less attractive and make a dent upon its present rapid growth.

[A. H. Nayyar, "Madrasah Education: Frozen in Time,"
in Pervez Hoodbhoy, ed., *Education and the State: Fifty Years
of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 224, 226, 241, 243, 246.]

2008 AND BEYOND: QUESTIONS OF PAKISTAN'S NATIONAL IDENTITY

General elections were held in February 2008. These had originally been scheduled for early January, but had to be postponed in the aftermath of the assassination of Benazir Bhutto on December 27, 2007, as she was returning from an election rally in Rawalpindi. Her assassination caused rioting in parts of Pakistan, especially in Sindh.

The February elections were a major setback for the pro-Musharraf political party, the Pakistan Muslim League–Quaid-i-Azam; the party lost the elections by a large margin, which was viewed as the popular rejection of Pervez Musharraf. The most successful party was the PPP, led first by Benazir Bhutto, and after her assassination by her widower Asif Ali Zardari and their son Bilawal. The second major party was the PML–N led by Nawaz Sharif, which won a majority in the Punjab but came second after the PPP at the federal level, in the National Assembly.

The PPP leader, Yousaf Raza Gilani, was elected prime minister in March 2008 to head a coalition government at the federal level. The PPP established coalition governments at the provincial level in Sindh and Balochistan. In the

Punjab it joined the coalition led by the PML–N. The NWFP government was headed by a PPP ally, the Awami National Party (ANP).

Though Musharraf had lost political credibility, he refused to quit the presidency, claiming that he would complete his second five-year term, 2007–2012. When Musharraf did not heed the calls for his resignation, the PPP and other political parties decided to impeach him in a joint session of Parliament. Before the impeachment motion was taken up, however, Musharraf decided to step down (August 18, 2008). In September Asif Ali Zardari, co-chairman of the PPP, was elected president with an overwhelming majority.

The PPP controlled all the major state offices at the federal level, but it performed poorly in addressing socioeconomic issues; this failure lost it the support of the common people. But it was able to develop a consensus with the top brass of the military for launching military action against the Taliban and other militant groups entrenched in the Malakand and the tribal areas (northwestern Pakistan). The Swat/Malakand operation, undertaken jointly by the army and air force in April–July 2009, freed the area from Taliban control. A similar operation was launched in the tribal areas in July–August 2009.

Pakistan's economy remained weak, ravaged by the Taliban insurgency in parts of the country and their suicide attacks and bombings in the major cities during 2007–2009. Pakistan relied heavily on international financial institutions and friendly countries, especially the United States, for an economic bailout. Relations with the United States, however, remain strained—particularly after May 2, 2011, when American operatives on a stealth mission found and killed Osama Bin Laden in a compound near a Pakistani military encampment outside Islamabad.

Pakistan's return to civilian rule has been viewed as a positive development. However, it is difficult to suggest that democratic institutions and processes have developed strong roots. Given the destabilizing effect of Islamic extremism and terrorism, a badly performing economy, the failure of the government to provide economic relief to the poor, interprovincial disharmony, and violence and insurgency in parts of Balochistan, the future of democracy remains uncertain. Many political analysts outside Pakistan continue to call it a “failed state” that could collapse altogether. This claim is contested by the Pakistani government and many scholars and analysts, although these analysts view Pakistan as a state facing enormous political, economic, and internal-stability problems, as well as severe external security challenges.

Pakistan's national identity continues to be debated both inside and outside the country. The debate revolves around three issues: the part to be played by Islam in the identity of the nation and the state; the nature of Pakistan's historical and cultural roots; and the role of the military in the political process.

As we have seen in earlier chapters, the pre-Independence Muslim League organized around Muslim identity, rights, and interests, as distinct from those of the majority Hindu community. In order to mobilize the Muslims of British

India to fight for a state of their own, the League had invoked a separatist vision of Islamic identity.

In the post-Independence period, the debate necessarily focused on defining the precise nature of the relationship between Islam and the Pakistani state, and on how to create political institutions and processes that reflected the consensus, if any, on these issues.

A section of the educated elite now argues that the Pakistani state should not identify with Islam, or engage in religious advocacy. Their perspective seems to have been attracting more attention since the Taliban's attempt to enforce Islamic orthodoxy by intimidation and coercion in parts of Pakistan in 2003–2009.

Jinnah's address to the first session of Pakistan's Constituent Assembly on August 11, 1947, maintained that the Pakistani state would extend equal treatment to all citizens irrespective of religion, which would not have anything to do with the affairs of the state. However, others of Jinnah's statements seem to indicate that Islam is relevant to state identity. The Objectives Resolution of 1949 combined modern notions of the state, democracy, and constitutionalism with the principles of social justice, equality, and participation, as enunciated in Islam. All Pakistani constitutions advocated a modern democratic state with an ethical basis derived from the teachings and principles of Islam. They also suggested that the state should play the role of an "enabler" rather than of an "enforcer" of Islam.

Most religious leaders favor a conservative Islamic state that implements traditional Islamic laws and punishments, although they differ among themselves on the precise details of such a state. General Zia ul-Haq's military government used the state apparatus to implement Islam as demanded mainly by Deobandi-Wahabi religious leaders, thus deepening Islamic-denominational fault lines in Pakistan.

The second unresolved debate pertains to Pakistan's main historical and cultural roots. Does Pakistan belong to the South Asian subcontinent, or should it seek its ancestral roots in the Arab Middle East, especially Saudi Arabia? General Zia's government consciously encouraged increased Saudi influence on the Islamization of Pakistan, which caused resentment among those who did not share Saudi-Wahabi Islamic traditions. During his time various changes were made in the course contents at the junior and senior school levels, to socialize young people into religious orthodoxy and militancy. By the beginning of the twenty-first century one Pakistani generation was indeed socialized into a mindset that valued Islamic orthodoxy and reflected the influences of the conservative Arab Middle East.

The influence of the Arab Middle East also increased as millions of Pakistani workers and professionals found jobs there and sent remittances back home. Increased identification with Islamic orthodoxy in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, further polarized Pakistani society on religious and cultural lines.

The third major aspect of Pakistani identity pertains to whether the military will sustain its role as the dominant political player. Some political analysts argue that criticism of the military top brass in the wake of the 2007 street protests has minimized the chances of the military returning to power. Others argue that the military has entrenched itself in the state system and the economy to such an extent that it can dominate policy-making from the sidelines.

Until the civilian leadership creates a credible and coherent civilian alternative to the military's influential role, and until Pakistan's internal security problems and external tensions can be eased, the military will retain the potential to manipulate, through direct or indirect means, the political life of the country.



Chapter 10

BANGLADESH

INDEPENDENCE AND CONTROVERSIES OVER THE FRUITS OF FREEDOM

TWO NATIONAL SONGS

We begin this chapter with two songs beloved in Bangladesh. The first, the Bangladeshi national anthem, “*Āmār Sonār Bāṅlā*” (“My Golden Bengal”), consists of several lines of a poem by Rabindranath Tagore, who spent eleven years of his life (1890–1901) in what is now the Kushtia District of Bangladesh, managing his father’s estates in Shilaidaha. During this period he traveled the region widely and wrote numerous short stories and poems set in its lush, riverine countryside. The poem excerpted for the national anthem was written in 1906, during the agitation over the first partition of Bengal. The song was adopted as the national anthem in 1972, after Bangladesh became independent. Tagore is thus claimed and beloved by India and Bangladesh: both countries have chosen one of his songs as their national anthem.

The second, a marching song, “*Cal Cal Cal*” (“March on, march on, march on!”), is by Kazi Nazrul Islam (1899–1976), known as the “*Bidrohī Kabi*” (“Rebel Poet”), who spent his active literary life in the western parts of Bengal in the 1920s and 1930s. He wrote nearly three thousand songs on themes of patriotism, romantic love, the evils of bigotry and fundamentalism, and Hindu–Muslim harmony (he married a Hindu woman, and in addition to songs on Islamic devotional practices wrote many devotional songs for Hindu deities). He was a good friend of Tagore, a passionate anti-imperialist, and, by early 1942, a critic of the idea of partition. In 1942 he was struck with what might have been some form of Pick’s disease, and lived the last thirty years of his

life without verbal or mental capacities. In 1972 Bangladesh obtained permission from the government of India to bring Nazrul to live in Dhaka, where he was made an honorary citizen and eventually the National Poet.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE: THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

Here Bengal is likened to a verdant motherland, or Ma.

My golden Bengal
 I love you.
 Your skies, your air
 forever play in my heart
 like a flute.
 Oh Ma,
 in spring the scent from the mango groves
 intoxicates me,
 thrills me.
 Oh Ma,
 in autumn I see
 sweet smiles in the ripened fields.
 What brilliance, what shade,
 what tenderness, what enchantment
 you spread like a cloth
 at the roots of banyan trees
 and along the banks of rivers.
 Ma, a word from your lips
 is like nectar to my ears,
 thrills me.
 Ma, if sadness ever darkens your face
 My eyes will brim with tears.

[Rabindranath Tagore, "Āmār Sonār Bāṅglā."
 Bengali original taken from "Virtual Bangladesh:
 The National Anthem of Bangladesh,"
http://www.virtualbangladesh.com/bd_anthem.html.
 Trans. R. F. McDermott.]

*KAZI NAZRUL ISLAM: "MARCH ON, MARCH ON,
 MARCH ON!"*

The song reproduced here was composed in the early 1930s, became popular during the 1971 war, and is today still sung in military contexts. The "peacock throne" of the last stanza refers to the Mughals' legendary seat of power, a throne carried off to Persia by Nadir Shah in 1739.

March on, march on, march on!
Drum beats sound in the sky,
and the earth below is restless.
Youth of the new dawn,
march, oh march, oh march!
March on, march on, march on!

Breaking down the doors of dawn
we will usher in a reddened morning
and shatter the night of darkness;
not even the Vindhya will obstruct our path.
We shall sing of the new and the young,
bringing life to the cremation ground,
a new heart,
new strength to our arms.
March, new soldiers, listen,
tune your ears to the call to life
at the gates of death.
Break, oh break them down;
March, oh march, oh march,
March on, march on, march on!

On high a thunderbolt booms its commands:
Open up your bedrooms; come out
dressed as soldiers and martyrs;
enter the military parade.
“When will the lost empire return?
I still crave it today.”
So you walk, singing melancholy songs,
tears streaming from your eyes.
No, leave behind the peacock throne;
wake up, wake up from your faint.
You see how many Persias, how many Romes, Greeces, and Russias
sank—and they all rose again.
Rise, feeble ones!
We will build a new Tajmahal from the dust.
March on, march on, march on!

[Nazrul Islam, “Cal Cal Cal.” Bengali original taken from
The Poetry of Kazi Nazrul Islam in English Translation,
vol. 1, ed. Mohammad Nurul Huda (Dhaka: Nazrul
Institute, 1997), 485–486. Trans. R. F. McDermott.]

THE FORMATIVE HISTORICAL CONTEXT, 1905–1947

Although Bangladeshi history proper does not begin until the birth of the nation in 1971, the periods between 1905 and 1947, when what is now Bangladesh was part of the British Raj's Bengal Presidency, and between 1947 and 1971, when it was East Pakistan, are significant—especially insofar as they contain the seeds of the divisiveness that led to the breakup of Pakistan. In addition, Lord Curzon's partition of Bengal (1905–1912), as a result of which the regions comprising modern-day Bangladesh and Assam were separated off from western Bengal and parts of Bihar into a separate province, foreshadowed the territorial splits of 1947 and 1971.

No one could have foretold, during the age of the Moderate politicians of the late nineteenth century, that Bengal would eventually split apart on the basis of popular support for Hindu and Muslim communal identities. Elites of both communities had more in common with each other than with their respective co-religionist masses, and rural Hindu and Muslim cultivators likewise shared a common context—although, as the riots of 1906–1907 showed, it must be remembered that Muslim peasants probably always fared worse, since most of the landlords were Hindu.

It was the partition of Bengal in 1905 that first made Hindu and Muslim elites both aware that there was irreconcilable conflict between British and Indian interests: they began to mobilize the masses around a program of passive resistance and boycott of foreign goods. Some politicians tried to reconcile Hindu and Muslim political imagery, but after 1905 the furor over the partition created a growing feeling of separation between Hindus and Muslims, as Muslim elites acclaimed the decision to split the Presidency. Led by Nawab Salimullah (1871–1915) of Dacca,¹ they formed the Muslim League on December 30, 1906, on a policy of loyalty to Britain and protection of Muslim political rights and aspirations. They were rewarded for this loyalty by the granting of separate electorates for Muslims in the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909, which exacerbated communal political rivalry. Although at the provincial level there was some Hindu–Muslim antagonism during the period, in particular the 1906–1907 riots in Mymensingh when Muslim peasants rose against their Hindu landlords, the anti-partition agitation largely failed to develop into a mass political movement.

When the partition was revoked in 1911, Muslims felt betrayed; the decision galled Nawab Salimullah; the League called it “an utter disregard of Muslim feeling”; and traditional Muslims politics, relying as they did on concessions and loyalty, were at an end. Salimullah's political successor, Fazlul Huq (1873–1962), called Sher-e Bangla (“Lion of Bengal”), became Bengal's Muslim League president in 1914. He championed the middle and lower classes, favoring them over elite zamindar politicians whose interests, he felt, were bound to the British.

The nine years from 1916 to 1925 witnessed several attempts, some of them uniquely Bengali, to form a rapprochement between Hindus and Muslims. In the Lucknow Pact of 1916, Hindus and Muslims agreed to work together for separate electorates and the equitable distribution of offices. Various events and decisions by the government between 1919 and 1922 afforded the two communities additional occasions for united political agitation: the Government of India Act of 1919, which provided for a dual form of government, or “dyarchy,” apparently for the sake of giving Indians more scope for self-governance; the agitation over the post-World War I fate of the caliphate; the oppressive Rowlatt Bills of 1919; and the killing of innocent people at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar. Many Indians of all backgrounds joined Gandhi’s non-cooperation and mobilization movements of 1920–1922, which ushered in a whole new style of mass politics. Finally, the formation in Bengal of the Swaraj Party by C. R. Das, who was trusted by members of both communities, presented Hindu and Muslim politicians with notable opportunities to work together. The height of this honeymoon period was the Bengal Pact of 1923 (see chapter 7), according to which Muslims were assured of receiving more than 55 percent of the positions in the Calcutta Corporation and other government offices, until such time as they had a share equal to their percentage of the population.

However, in the mid-1920s, after Das’s death, the Turkish abolition of the caliphate, and Gandhi’s decision to call off the Non-Cooperation movement, attempts to keep communalism out of Bengali politics faltered. Huq founded the Krishak Praja Party in 1928 to play down religious differences and to emphasize economic disparities instead, but all-India incidents and actions by the British only served to heat up the political atmosphere. As a result of the Communal Award of 1932, which divided political power among rival groups of Indians on the basis of loyalty to Britain,² the Hindu *bhadralok* (elite) was awarded a minority of legislative seats in Bengal, and in order to shore up their political power they chose to reach out to the Depressed Classes.

The crucial events in Bengal during the decade prior to Independence, 1937 to 1947, were World War II and the Japanese bombings of Calcutta from 1942 to 1944; the Famine of 1943 and resultant migrations of desperate people into Calcutta; the political decline of the Hindus and ascendancy of the Muslims; and the spread of the Pakistan movement. Each of the four Bengal ministries of the period was led by a Muslim—Fazlul Huq (1937–1941 and 1941–1943), Nazimuddin (1943–1945), and Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy (1945–1947)—although Muslim politicians were not always in agreement, especially when Bengali interests were seen to clash with pan-Indian, or incipient Pakistani, ones. Fazlul Huq’s lower-class Krishak Praja Party campaigned against, and beat, the elite Muslim League in 1936. In spite of the fact that the Bengal Congress requested him to form a coalition in 1937, Gandhi vetoed such an alliance and Huq joined forces with the League, giving it a mass base and effectively handing Bengal to Jinnah. By 1941, however, there was disaffection between the two leaders. Huq refused

to call Jinnah the Quaid-e Azam, described him as a “political dictator,” and stated that “Bengal does not count much in the counsels of political leaders outside our province, although we constitute more than one-third of the total Muslim population of India.”³ Jinnah expelled him from the League. Huq then reached out again to the Congress, but by this time, politics had hardened: Sarat Bose was imprisoned; Congress came increasingly to be identified with dominant Hindu, not secular, interests; and Muslim-dominated Bengal ministries were felt to be partisan. Huq’s second government (1941–1943) did include some Hindu politicians, most prominently the Hindu Mahasabha leader Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, but this government too was dissolved. Thereafter it proved impossible to form a Congress–Krishak Praja Party coalition. The Calcutta riots of August 16, 1946, called Direct Action Day by Jinnah to protest against the Cabinet Mission Plan for the independence of India, caused massive loss of life, of property, and of communal goodwill in the city; Suhrawardy, by then premier of Bengal, was widely blamed for failing to prevent the carnage and for suppressing media coverage of it (see Azad’s and Ikramullah’s documents in chapter 7).

In February 1947 the prime minister of Britain, Clement Atlee, announced that the British were going to leave in the summer of 1948 and would hand over power. In a last attempt to keep Bengal together, in April 1947 Suhrawardy—supported by Sarat Bose—raised the slogan of an undivided sovereign Bengal, which could decide later whether to opt for Pakistan, to opt for India, or to remain independent. This free state of Bengal would have joint electorates and equal numbers of Hindus and Muslims in the ministry. Suhrawardy, fearful of domination by North Indian Muslims and following upon his understanding of the Lahore Resolution, which allowed for regional variations in the formation of states, appealed in his arguments for the free state to Bengali character and sentiment. But United Bengal never had a chance. Neither Jinnah nor Nehru supported it. Most Hindus feared a united independent Bengal: in none of the four Muslim-led ministries since 1937 had they enjoyed any significant political power. By March 1947 most Hindus, upper-caste and so-called “Depressed” alike, wanted a separate West Bengal. Suhrawardy’s proposal earned him the antipathy of Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan, the latter calling him an “Indian dog let loose by Jawaharlal Nehru,”⁴ and in 1947 he was passed over for the job of chief minister of East Pakistan. About three million people were displaced in greater Bengal due to Partition.

LIFE IN EAST PAKISTAN, 1947–1971: MOVING TOWARD THE SPLIT

Almost from the beginning, the relationship between East and West Pakistan, or the east and west wings (or zones), as they were called, was troubled. While West Pakistan had almost six times as much territory as East Pakistan (310,403 vs. 55,126 square miles, respectively), East Pakistan had more people (42.06 million

vs. 33.78 million, according to the 1951 Census), and hence expected to be treated as an equal partner. But West Pakistanis were passionately committed to a strong central government, which they physically situated in Karachi, refusing to convene meetings of the Constituent Assembly in Dacca even once a year. East Bengal was very much underrepresented in the central government, in the civil service, and in the military (Bengalis were said to be weak, whereas Punjabis were naturally martial); it received disproportionately low amounts of foreign aid and development projects; and all the banking was in the hands of West Pakistan. East Pakistanis were also accused of being naturally seditious, due to Hindu and communist influences.

THE LANGUAGE MOVEMENT

The issue that encapsulated all others was language. East Pakistani pleas for the inclusion of Bengali as a second state language for Pakistan, equal in status to Urdu, were repeatedly denied (the subsequent 1951 Census confirmed that only 1 percent of the Bengali people could read Urdu). Indeed, from the beginning the language issue became a fulcrum for East Pakistani resentment; disagreements over the status of Bengali began in 1948 and culminated in the partition of Pakistan in 1971.

DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA'S HISTORIC PLEA AND JINNAH'S ADDRESS IN DHAKA

On February 25, 1948, Dharendra Nath Datta, a Hindu member of the Constituent Assembly, moved an amendment that Bengali be added to English as a language to be used in the House along with Urdu. His principal argument was one of fairness: East Pakistanis outnumbered West Pakistanis in the State of Pakistan, and thus Urdu should not take precedence over Bengali. Datta was supported by other Hindu and Muslim representatives from East Pakistan. The prime minister and minister for defense, Liaquat Ali Khan, argued against them, alarming the non-Muslim members of the Assembly by his equation of Pakistan with a Muslim state; his view easily prevailed.

The news of the defeat of Datta's amendment caused agitation in East Pakistan. Jinnah, however, did not take it seriously, because he was led by his advisors to think that it was fomented by a conspiracy of disgruntled political adversaries, Hindus, communists, and anti-Pakistani groups operating from Calcutta.

In his address in Dacca on March 21, 1948, Jinnah warned against provincialism.

But let me make it clear to you that the state language of Pakistan is going to be Urdu and no other language. Anyone who tries to mislead [you] is merely the enemy of Pakistan. Without one state language, no nation can remain tied up

solidly together and function. Look at the history of other countries. There[fore] so far as the state language is concerned, Pakistan's language should be Urdu; but, as I have said it will come in time.

[From *The Nation's Voice*, vol. 7: *Launching the State and the End of the Journey* (Aug. 1947–Sept. 1948), ed. Waheed Ahmad (Karachi: Quaid-i-Azam Academy, 2003). Slightly edited by Frances Pritchett. See http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00islamlinks/txt_jinnah_dacca_1948.html, para. 22.]

ABDUL GAFFAR CHAUDHURI'S FAMOUS ELEGY FOR THE FEBRUARY 1952 MARTYRS

Jinnah's statement was not well received. In 1949, partly as a result of East Pakistani frustration with policies formulated by Jinnah and the Muslim League, veteran Bengali politicians such as Suhrawardy and the left-leaning Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani turned away from the League and formed their own political party, the East Pakistan Awami League. They purposely avoided incorporating the word "Muslim" in the title, for they wanted the party to be truly national. One of their demands was the recognition of Bengali as a state language. To force the government to recognize Bengali as a state language, students and League members organized, demonstrated, and called for a national boycott on February 21, when Khwaja Nazimuddin, the new prime minister of Pakistan, was due to visit Dacca. In clashes with the police on that day, four students were killed on the University of Dacca campus. They became the first "martyrs" of the language movement, and February 21, or "Ekushey February," has been immortalized in Bangladeshi history as the real beginning of the Independence movement. In 1963 a monument called the Shahid Minar was erected in Dacca in honor of the slain. In 1999 UNESCO internationalized the commemoration by declaring February 21 to be International Mother Language Day.

The following, "Āmār Bhāier Rakte Rāngāno" by Abdul Gaffar Chaudhuri (b. 1934), is perhaps the most famous of many poems commemorating the event. It is still sung nonstop every year on February 21, from midnight to noon, on the University of Dhaka campus. A *nāginī* here means a female soldier; Baishakh is the hot month of February–March. *Rajani gandha* flowers are sweet-smelling tuberoses.

The twenty-first of February was reddened by my brother's blood,
Can I ever forget that;
This February was built on the tears of hundreds of mothers who
lost their sons.
Can I ever forget that;
This February, reddened with the blood of my golden land,
Can I ever forget that.

Arise all you *nāginīs*, arise, arise, oh violent winds of Baisakh.
 Let the earth tremble today out of grief for her slain children;
 They have murdered the sons of this golden land and thwarted
 the claims of man,
 And when these times will change, then will you all escape?
 No, no, no, no, in murder-reddened-history this final judgment was made
 By the twenty-first of February, the twenty-first of February!

On that very day at the end of winter, underneath blue skies,
 The moon smilingly bestowed a kiss,
 And on path after path bloomed *rajanī gandha* flowers, as if a
 heavenly garden,
 At that time the storm arose, wild and crazily.
 The faces of those beasts of darkness are now well-known,
 Mothers sisters and brothers all hate them with a passion.

They fired on those lives and frustrated the country's demands,
 They crushed the breast of Bengal underfoot;
 They are not of this land
 But instead sell the fate of this very country,
 They have snatched away food, clothing, and the peace of man,
 Oh twenty-first of February, twenty-first of February.

Arise, arise today, arise today, oh February twenty-first;
 Still today in the prison of oppression die heroic men and women;
 The souls of my martyred brothers are calling,
 Arise, oh dormant force of man throughout market-place, field,
 and river-bank—
 We shall once again fire up the month of February with our anger's
 intense heat:
 Oh twenty-first of February, oh twenty-first of February.

[Translated in *Lyric Poetry* by Qazi Abdul Mannan and Clinton B. Seely
 (New York: Learning Resources in International Studies, 1974), 17–18.]

POLITICAL JOCKEYING AND THE REDRESSING OF PERCEIVED WRONGS: 1952 TO 1958

Although the symbolic status of Bengali continued to be a rallying cry for the next nineteen years, the language movement did achieve its stated purpose: on February 29, 1956, the new Constitution of Pakistan (Clause I of Para. 214 of the State Language section) confirmed that “The State Languages of Pakistan will be Urdu and Bengali.”

One year after the slaying of students in the University of Dacca grounds, three respected politicians joined forces to oust the Muslim League in Bengal; by 1953 the League had become a complacent organization that had not supported the language movement and was out of step with popular aspirations. Fazlul Huq merged his Krishak Praja Party with the Awami League of Suhrawardy and Bhashani, forming the United Front Party on December 4, 1953, with a historic twenty-one point program as its election manifesto. This United Front Party was so successful that by 1956, and thereafter for a brief two years, East Pakistan came the closest it ever would to achieving parity with West Pakistan, for Suhrawardy assumed the position of prime minister, in Karachi.

THE TWENTY-ONE POINT PROGRAM OF THE UNITED FRONT PARTY

Note the attention given here to economic, linguistic, educational, and military parity between the east and west wings. The "black laws" in point 11 refer to a Pakistani ordinance that totally deprived of their autonomy all the universities believed responsible for the 1952 uprisings. Point 19 was the most radical: it amounted, in the eyes of West Pakistanis, to incipient secession. This program became the basis of all subsequent political and constitutional movements in East Pakistan until December 16, 1971.

The United Front Party, if voted to power, will fulfill the following program within the next five years of its regime:

There will be no enactment in the House which is repugnant to the fundamental principles of Holy Quran and Sunnah, and provisions will be made for the citizens to live their lives on the basis of Islamic equality and brotherhood.

1. To make Bengali one of the state languages of Pakistan;
2. To abolish without compensation all rent-receiving interest in land and to distribute the surplus lands among the landless cultivators and bring down the rent to a fair level and abolish the certificate procedure for realizing rent;
3. To nationalize jute trade, to make arrangements for giving to jute-growers fair price of jute and to investigate into the jute-bungling during the Muslim League regime, to punish those who will be found responsible for the bungling and to forfeit all their properties earned thereby;
4. To introduce co-operative farming and to improve the conditions of cottage industries and manual works;
5. To start salt industries, both cottage and big, in order to make East Pakistan self-sufficient in the supply of salt;
6. To immediately rehabilitate all refugees, particularly those who are artisans and technicians;
7. To improve the irrigation system and save the country from flood and famine;

8. To industrialize East Pakistan and to guarantee the economic and social rights of industrial labor, according to the I.L.O. [International Labour Organization] conventions;
9. To introduce free and compulsory primary education and to arrange for a just pay and allowance for the teachers;
10. To reorient the entire secondary system by abolishing the discrimination between Government and private schools, and to introduce only the mother tongue as the medium of instructions;
11. To do away with all the reactionary black laws of Dacca and Rajshahi Universities and to make them autonomous institutions;
12. To make an all-out curtailment of the Administration and to rationalize the pay scale of high and low-paid Government servants; United Front Ministers shall not accept more than Rs. 1,000 as their monthly salary;
13. To eradicate corruption, nepotism, and bribery, and with this end in view, to take stock of the properties of all Government officers and businessmen from the year 1940 onward and forfeit all unexplained properties;
14. To release all security prisoners who are detained in jail under various public safety acts and ordinances and to guarantee freedom of the Press, speech and associations;
15. To separate the executive from the judiciary;
16. To convert Burdwan House for the present into a students' residence and afterwards to a research institute of Bengali language and literature;
17. To erect a martyrs' monument to commemorate the sacred memory of those who gave their lives for the Bengali language and literature;
18. To declare February 21 as "Shahid Day" and to observe it as a public holiday;
19. In accordance with the historic Lahore Resolution, to secure full and complete autonomy and bring all subjects under the jurisdiction of East Pakistan, leaving only defense, foreign affairs, and currency under the jurisdiction of the center. Even in the matter of defense, arrangement shall be such as to have the headquarters of Army in West Pakistan and the headquarters of Navy in East Pakistan and to establish ordnance factories in East Pakistan, with a view to making East Pakistan self-sufficient in the matter of defense and also to convert the present Ansars into full-fledged militia;
20. United Front Cabinet shall on no account extend the life of the Legislature and the Ministry shall six months before the general election arrange for a free and fair election through the agency of an Election Commission;
21. All casual vacancies in the Legislature shall be filled up through by-elections within three months of the date of the vacancies, and if the United Front nominees are defeated in three successive by-elections, the Ministry shall voluntarily resign from office.

[From A. K. M. Shamsul Huda, *The Constitution of Bangladesh*
(Chittagong: Rita Court, 1997), 1:69–71.]

THE ARGUMENT FOR JOINT ELECTORATES

In the 1954 elections Huq led the United Front Party to a landslide victory over the Muslim League; of the 309 seats in the House, the United Front won 228, and the Muslim League only 7. But the Centre in West Pakistan refused to allow the party to form a government, and while the parties were waiting and agitating, the glue holding the Front together came unstuck, with Huq, Suhrawardy, and Bhashani in disagreement on the implementation of several of the twenty-one points. Two years later, in 1956, when the Awami League (the “East Pakistan” prefix was dropped from the party’s name after it briefly joined the United Front) was finally invited to form a coalition government in Karachi, it was Suhrawardy who became prime minister. His term in office, 1956 to 1958, was the only period in which a Bengali assumed the supreme position of power in Pakistan.

In some ways Suhrawardy (1892–1963) was the ideal Bengali candidate for this job. Although born in Midnapur, western Bengal, he had grown up in an Urdu-speaking aristocratic household of Persian ancestry, had been called to the bar in London, and was a polished orator with a lively, even haughty brilliance; moreover, for about twenty years prior to Independence he had been a Muslim League supporter. However, Suhrawardy’s tenure at the Center was not untroubled. The United Front platform had been very specific, with calls for the nationalization of the jute industry, for instance, and the punishment of corruption; but he focused less on practical matters than on ideological concerns. With the language issue resolved and hence off the agenda, the Awami League’s political attention was focused on joint electorates. With Hindus comprising nearly 20 percent of the population of East Pakistan, Bengali politicians felt that separate electorates would only be divisive.

HUSEYN SHAHEED SUHRAWARDY: SPEECH BEFORE THE DACCA PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY

The following are excerpts from a historic speech on the subject that Suhrawardy gave before the Dacca Provincial Assembly on October 10, 1956. The “great man” of whom he sarcastically speaks is Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi—who, although he had been an early opponent of the Pakistan movement, was now insisting on retaining the separate electorate system.

It is true beyond a doubt that the practice of separate electorates was an excellent weapon for Muslims in a united India. . . . In order to create the nation of Pakistan, Muslims in those regions of India where they were in the majority relied upon the weapon of the two-nation idea. But since the establishment of the nation, that notion of the two nations is useless. If it were followed today, the result would be the further division of Pakistan, and the establishment of a new state where non-Muslims are in a majority. This idea is so horrible that if he thinks of it, every Pakistani will tremble in fear. . . . Today within our country

we do not wish to create any separatist tendency, for developing one nation is our compulsory duty. . . .

A few people say that joint electorates are opposed to Islam, and that if the National Assembly passes the bill it will be a deed against Islam. My own belief, and that of all the world's Muslim countries, is that there are no rules in Islam relating to elections; trying to stretch Islam to defend such a view is futile. But apart from any question of my belief, according to the present constitution, the final responsibility for deciding what is in accordance with Islam and what is not lies with the state, and its constitutional committees and national assemblies. . . .

A few ulema, especially one who leads the movement against joint electorates, pronounce some things as Islamic and others as un-Islamic, according to their own convenience. You may remember that this "great man" at one time announced the idea of Pakistan to be the creation of un-Islamic powers, the West, and weak-minded peoples, and he issued a fatwa that people should work with all energy against the Pakistan movement. Now it is his opinion that Pakistan is an Islamic state. . . . I would also like to remind you that this same gentleman said that the Quaid-i-Azam does not know the abc's of Islam. He also denounced Khwaja Nazimuddin . . . as an enemy of Islam because he was in favor of giving the vote to women and the freedom of religion to all citizens of the state. . . . In our current constitution, not only have women been given the vote but there are rules for election deputies from among them; moreover, the freedom of religion has been accepted as a fundamental right. . . . For this reason I am against our constitution wearing an Islamic badge. Before taking up any other matter I want to reiterate these words of caution: if we affix an Islamic label on anything it will not be easy to erase it. I make this public plea to everyone: do not drag the holy name of Islam into this controversy. . . .

Furthermore, is Pakistan the world's only Muslim land? In Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria, Iran, Lebanon, Jordan, and Afghanistan, the Shariah is the proclaimed law. Are these not Muslim countries? Do any of them have separate electorates? At the time of their subjugation by imperial governments, one or two of these countries did have the practice of separate electorates. But who did not know that this custom was preserved for the purpose of dividing people? As soon as they got independence, they lifted all divisions among Muslims and non-Muslims and took the path of joint electorates. If one listens to the fatwa, "Joint electorates are un-Islamic," what will be the reaction in those countries? What will they think of Pakistan and its "great man"? . . .

In the creation of one national feeling and one country, joint electorates will be helpful and will render null and void all divisive inclinations. However much we might want to avoid it, separate electorates will ignite the fires of religious difference. . . . The current demand for separate electorates derives from a deep suspicion or lack of trust, even hatred, of non-Muslims. I know that the wounds of Partition still have not healed. Perhaps some men will have to pass on before they can be healed. But we must begin here to be freed from this sickness. . . .

Those who support separate electorates say that as a result of joint electorates Hindus will come to dominate Muslims, will take control of seats, and will do bad things to Muslims. This argument is promulgated in areas of Pakistan where there are very few Hindus. It is quite amazing that the people of West Pakistan who are completely ignorant of East Pakistan attempt to impose this political remedy on us and give the impression that they are the saviors of East Pakistan, when they do not know anything of the sentiments of Muslim East Pakistanis. . . .

I will give a few examples of joint electorates in the life of East Pakistan in order to prove the insignificance of the arguments of these supposed saviors. In the Faridpur district board, where according to separate electorates there were supposed to be 25 Muslim and 11 Hindu seats, in actual joint elections 32 Muslims and only 4 Hindus were elected. In Dinajpur, where, according to separate electorates based on total population, there would be 12 Muslims and 9 Hindus, in actual elections 21 Muslims were elected, and no Hindus. . . . If arrangements for joint electorates cause any people to suffer loss of self-interest, it will be the Hindus. Then why do Hindus support them? . . . Hindus believe that as a result of separate electorates they will always be a minority, from the constitutional viewpoint. . . . It would be to their benefit if we dropped the term "minority community" entirely. . . . Although Hindus are at present generous, they could change into people who distrust and hate the majority. Then it will not be possible for Muslims not to harbor unfriendly feelings toward them. The facts that Hindus today are not snatching away a disproportionate number of seats and are willing to take a kindly perspective on one nation, unity, and trust demonstrate their political foresight.

I believe that there will come a time when talk of the differences of religion for the benefits of Muslim and non-Muslim peoples will be forgotten and that we will get to work in every corner of the country, joining together shoulder to shoulder.

[From "Yukto Nirbācaner 'Ki' o 'Keno'?", in *Ganatantrer Mānasputra*
Hosen Shahīd Sohrāoyārdī, ed. Saiyad Toshāraph Ālī (Dhaka:
 City Publishing House, 1998), 179–187. Trans. R. F. McDermott.]

THE TRANSITION TO MILITARY RULE AND THE ESCALATION OF BENGALI NATIONALISM: 1958 TO 1971

During Suhrawardy's term in office, joint electorates were mandated in both wings of Pakistan. Many West Pakistanis, particularly the moribund Muslim League, saw joint electorates as a challenge to the very idea of the state, founded as it had been on the existence of two separate cultures. Suhrawardy was unpopular in the West for other reasons as well: as a Bengali, he was not trusted; like most of the elite at the time in Bangladesh he was secular; he had an inde-

pendent power base in East Pakistan; and he tried to curtail the power of the army. Over time, Bengalis also felt betrayed by his leadership, since he had come to power on an Awami League platform contesting the act of 1955 in which the four provinces (Punjab, Northwest Frontier Province, Sindh, and Baluchistan), the capital, several former princely states, and the tribal areas of West Pakistan were to be consolidated administratively into "One Unit." The Awami League saw this as an abrogation of provincial autonomy, but as prime minister, Suhrawardy had to champion it. The Awami League in East Pakistan, from 1964 under the new leadership of Suhrawardy's political protégé, Sheikh Mujib, denounced the One Unit idea and demanded full economic regional autonomy for East Pakistan. While Suhrawardy managed to calm his opponents in both wings, the resulting stability was short-lived.

In July 1957 Maulana Bhashani broke from the Awami League to form the National Awami Party, with local chapters in both East and West Pakistan. Bhashani had always stood to the socialist left of his colleagues, even using Marxist language to champion the downtrodden peasant; his new party called for the breaking of military ties with Western countries, political and economic autonomy in the provinces (he too was against the 1955 act consolidating West Pakistan into "One Unit"), and the abolition of the zamindari system (in which hereditary aristocrats owned large tracts of land and taxed the peasants who worked on it)—without compensation to the landowners. Such infighting in East Pakistan, as politicians squabbled with each other over their own power bases and failed to address the real concerns of their political constituents, was so destructive of social order that the September 1958 meeting of the East Pakistan Assembly dissolved into scuffles and even murders of parliamentarians.

Using the disorder in the province as an excuse, on October 7, 1958, President Iskander Mirza dismissed Suhrawardy and his Awami League government, abrogated the Constitution of 1956, and gave all power to the army under Field Marshall Ayub Khan, who placed the country under forty-four months of martial law. Since the army was dominated by the western wing, this arrangement further impaired the balance between East and West.

In retrospect, the strictures that Ayub Khan implemented in order to keep Pakistan under control almost guaranteed the complete loss of fellow-feeling between the two wings of the country; indeed, under his aegis, between 1958 and 1969 Pakistan moved inexorably toward division. Khan abolished political parties, banned student bodies, enacted in 1962 a new constitution in which all power was vested in him as president, and led the country into war with India over Kashmir, in 1965. The decision to enter this conflict was taken by West Pakistan without consulting the East, which wanted improved relations, not war, with India. In fact, Khan had no interest in East–West relations, and even the little representation of East Pakistan at the Centre that had existed under Suhrawardy was lost during his regime. After Suhrawardy's death in 1963 there was no national leader who could garner support in both wings for a return to

democracy, so when Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who succeeded Suhrawardy as leader of the Awami League in 1964, made the historic demand for his “Six Points” in 1966, five of the six were presented as Bengali demands, for the benefit—indeed, autonomy—of the east wing.

SHEIKH MUJIB: THE AWAMI LEAGUE’S SIX POINTS

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (1920–1975) came from the Faridpur district in eastern Bengal, and soon found his *métier* in politics. After joining the Bengal Muslim League in 1943, he grew close to Suhrawardy, and it was under the latter’s patronage that he rose in East Pakistani politics as a student leader. In 1949 he left the Muslim League to join Suhrawardy and Bhashani in forming the Awami League; in that same year he was elected joint secretary. By 1956, after four years in jail for his support of the Bengali Language Movement, he joined the Awami League Cabinet and served until 1958 in the second Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. When Ayub Khan suspended the Constitution and imposed martial law in 1958, Sheikh Mujib went underground with a group of student activists to oppose Khan’s regime. His Six Point Formula reflects his long-standing commitment to political autonomy and popular uplift. Following his announcement of the six points, his followers began to refer to him as *Bangabandhu*, “Friend of Bengal,” and it was he who coined the name Bangladesh (“Land of Bengal”), in December 1969. This new name was a symbolic severance of ties with Pakistan and a reminder of the Bengali nationalism that characterized the liberation movement.

The following excerpts are taken from an appeal issued by Sheikh Mujib as president of the Awami League on March 23, 1966, after the Six-Point Formula had been formally adopted by the party.

6-POINT FORMULA — OUR RIGHT TO LIVE

Point 1

The Constitution should provide for a Federation of Pakistan in its true sense on the basis of the Lahore Resolution, and Parliamentary form of Government with supremacy of Legislature directly elected on the basis of universal adult franchise.

Point 2

Federal Government shall deal with only two subjects, viz: Defense and Foreign Affairs, and all other residuary subjects shall vest in the Federating States.

Point 3

I recommend either of the following two measures with regard to our Currency, viz:

A. Two separate but freely convertible currencies for two wings may be introduced, or

B. One currency for the whole country may be maintained. In this case, effective constitutional provisions are to be made to stop flight of capital from East to West Pakistan. Separate Banking Reserve is to be made and separate fiscal and monetary policy is to be adopted for East Pakistan.

Point 4

The power of taxation and revenue collection shall vest in the federating units and the Federal Centre will have no such power. The Federation will have a share in the state taxes for meeting their required expenditure. The Consolidated Federal Fund shall come out of a levy of [a] certain percentage of all state taxes.

Point 5

(1) There shall be two separate accounts for foreign exchange earnings of the two wings;

(2) Earnings of East Pakistan shall be under the control of East Pakistan Government and that of West Pakistan under the control of West Pakistan Government;

(3) Foreign exchange requirement of the Federal Government shall be met by the two wings either equally or in a ratio to be fixed;

(4) Indigenous products shall move free of any duty betwixt the two wings; and

(5) The Constitution shall empower the unit Governments to establish trade and commercial relations with, set up trade missions in, and enter into agreement with, foreign countries.

Point 6

I recommend setting up a militia or a para-military force for East Pakistan.

An Appeal

Now, before concluding, I want to submit a few words to my West Pakistani brethren:

Firstly, they should not run away with the idea that whatever I have stated above I have done in the interest of East Pakistan only. It is not so. In each of my 6-points is inherent a corresponding benefit to my West Pakistani brethren. . . .

Secondly, when I speak of East Pakistan's wealth being flown to and concentrated in West Pakistan I only mean regional concentration. I do not thereby mean that this wealth has reached the masses of West Pakistan. . . . I know there are millions like us in West Pakistan who also are unfortunate victims of economic exploitation. . . .

[In his third point he asks West Pakistanis to consider how they would be feeling if the roles were reversed, with the Center of the country in Dacca. Fourth, he reminds them that Bengalis have made many concessions to the West, out of a brotherly spirit.]

Fifthly, . . . We believe that this feeling of absolute equality, sense of interwing justice and impartiality is the very basis of Pakistani patriotism. Only he is fit to be a leader of Pakistan who is imbued with and consumed by such patriotism. A leader who sincerely believes that the two wings of Pakistan are really two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, two rows of teeth, two hands, and two legs of the body-politic of Pakistan, a leader who feels that to make Pakistan healthy and strong one must make each one of these pairs equally healthy and strong, a leader who earnestly believes that to weaken any one of these limbs is to weaken Pakistan as a whole, . . . is the only person entitled to claim the national leadership of Pakistan.

Sixthly, let me humbly remind my West Pakistani brothers and sisters that when we demanded Bengali to be made one of the two State Languages of Pakistan you condemned it as a move to undo Pakistan. When again we demanded joint electorates particularly in the context of parity in representation demanded by you, you condemned our demand to have been inspired from across the border. Both of these two demands have now been accepted, but there has been no undoing of Pakistan due to their acceptance. Does it not put you to shame that every bit of reasonable demand of East Pakistan has got to be secured from you at tremendous cost and after bitter struggle as if snatched from unwilling foreign rulers as a reluctant concession? Does it do you any credit? Please put a stop to such attitude once for all. Please be brothers instead of rulers.

[From *Bangla Desh Documents* (New Delhi: Ministry of External Affairs, 1971–1973), 1:24–32.]

MOVING TOWARD CIVIL WAR: THE HORROR, THE VICTORY

The West Pakistani reaction to Sheikh Mujib's six points was naturally unfavorable, and both Ayub Khan and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, leader of the Pakistan People's Party, formed in 1967 in opposition to military rule, condemned them as tantamount to secession. Khan's leadership could have withstood the criticism from East Pakistan, but Bhutto's rising popularity, combined with the disaffection of the army, led to his political demise. In March 1969 Yahya Khan, commander-in-chief of the army, toppled Khan, imposed martial law again, and took over the running of the country.

Yahya's rule was regarded by Bangladeshis as violating all canons of national justice and human rights. An authoritarian who allowed no dissent or discussion, in East Pakistan he was widely perceived to have handled the devastating cyclone that hit the area on November 12–13, 1970, sluggishly and ineptly. His

ignorance of public opinion was demonstrated in the elections of December 1970, which he confidently assumed would hand power back to an army-sponsored government. Instead, the majority of the 138 seats representing West Pakistan went to Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party, and all but two of the available 162 seats in the East were netted by the Awami League. This gave Sheikh Mujib the majority, and he claimed the right to become prime minister of the country.

However, no one in West Pakistan—Yahya, Bhutto, or West Pakistanis in general—was willing to concede this change in leadership. Bhutto announced that no constitution could be framed nor government run at the center without his party's cooperation. In all of this sparring, Sheikh Mujib refused to compromise: he would not show his draft constitution, tone down any of his six points, or budge an inch in talks with Bhutto. Although he had congratulated Mujib on his victory, Yahya stalled, delaying the Assembly session at which the new government would take over. Strikes, some of them bloody, erupted in East Pakistan, and the East Pakistani Bihari community, widely believed to be sympathetic to West Pakistan, was targeted and massacred. When Yahya arrived in Dacca on March 15, 1971, for talks with Mujib and Bhutto, the province was in a state of anarchy. The talks were acrimonious and inconclusive. Yahya announced that the National Assembly would meet in Dacca on March 25, 1971.

Mujib used the celebration of March 23, or Pakistan Day (when the Lahore Resolution had been adopted), to call for a Resistance Day; his supporters raised the new Bangladesh flag and burned Pakistani flags and effigies of Jinnah. On March 24, Yahya authorized the army to put "Operation Searchlight" into effect. As he and Bhutto secretly flew back to Islamabad on March 25, the Pakistani army in East Pakistan enforced martial law, arrested Sheikh Mujib, banned the Awami League, expelled foreign journalists, attacked Awami League supporters all over the country, and targeted East Bengali regiments of the West Pakistani army such as the East Pakistan Rifles, who were assumed to be disloyal. The survivors formed the backbone of the Mukti Bahini, or Bengali freedom fighters. Yahya's broadcast to the nation on March 26 announced the breakdown of order and the necessity of martial law. Major Ziaur Rahman, claiming to represent Sheikh Mujib, proclaimed from Chittagong the birth of an independent Bangladesh.

The ensuing nine months of guerilla warfare—even civil war—were brutal. Although East Pakistani fighters did manage to target and kill West Pakistani soldiers, it was East Pakistanis who suffered disproportionately, with horrific experiences of civilian displacement, torture, and death. For instance, on the very first night of the crackdown more than two hundred students in University of Dacca dormitories were indiscriminately massacred. Indeed, many Bangladeshi historians use the term "genocide" to describe the intent of West Pakistani forces during this period. The Pakistani army crushed resistance in the cities fairly quickly, but they were unable to penetrate deeply into the countryside, which was held by the Mukti Bahini. The West Pakistani army relied on

collaborators, since the army personnel could not even read the local road signs; most of these came from rightist groups, including Ghulam Azam's Jamaat-e Islami; they formed the volunteer group Al-Badar. Between March and December 1971 perhaps ten million people, 80–90 percent of them Hindus, were displaced and turned into refugees, flooding the northeastern states of India. An estimated two hundred thousand women were raped, some in army "rape camps." As for the dead, estimates vary wildly, from hundreds of thousands to three million.

The Indian government provided shelter, military training, and arms to the East Pakistan resistance. Indira Gandhi, buoyant after a landslide election victory in India in March 1971 and responding to genuine Indian expressions of support for Bengalis after the crackdown, issued statements of her "deep anguish" for the "people of Bangladesh," and in June told the Indian Parliament that India would not accept a solution to the Pakistan crisis that entailed the death of Bengali aspirations. Indian troops attacked Jessore on November 20, and by December 3 there was all-out war. Yahya appealed to the Chinese and to the United States, both of which countries gave lip service assurances of support, but within days it was clear that the Pakistani army would have to surrender. On December 16, Pakistani general A. A. K. Niazi surrendered to Indian lieutenant-general Jagjit Singh Arora, and Bangladesh was born.

December 1971 witnessed some of the worst atrocities of the war. Once it was clear that Pakistan would lose, paramilitary groups, principally the Al-Badar, the armed wing of the Jamaat, executed a calculated liquidation of more than two hundred leading Bengali intellectuals (journalists, doctors, and professors). Although to a significantly lesser degree, West Pakistani loyalists also experienced fear and death; military *mémoires* describe the week between December 16 and 22, when the provisional government returned to Dacca, as one of jubilant and vengeful killings by members of the Mukti Bahini. Indian army forces, however, remained until March 1972, and helped to reduce such violence.

Jahanara Imam's Wartime Diary

Some of the most moving testaments to the horror and despair of 1971 are preserved in novels, short stories, and poetry. The first excerpt below is from the published diaries of Jahanara Imam (1929–1994), who spent her life in higher education as both headmistress of a girls' school and professor in the Teachers' Training College in Dacca. Following the army crackdown on March 25, her son Rumi joined the liberation struggle. To help assuage her anxiety about his welfare, Imam kept a diary during the nine months of the war. Rumi did not return, and her husband, Shariful Alam Imam Ahmed, died after having been picked up for questioning by the Pakistani army. After Imam published her diary in 1986, she was famed as *Shahīd Jananī* ("Mother of Martyrs").

Thursday, 25th March, 1971

After the remarkable success of the Resistance Day on 23rd March, there was a shadow of gloom. Only disturbing news came from everywhere. The meetings between Yahya, Mujib and Bhutto failed to find a solution. Sheikh Mujib carried on his meetings with the President and after the meetings continued to repeat to the journalists that the talks were progressing. At the same time he asked the people to carry on with their struggle. He called upon them to build fortresses in every house.

For the last few days there have been rumours afloat that thousands of Pakistani troops were landing at Dhaka airport in plain clothes. I didn't want to believe it but still it created a sense of unease in me. Some friends telephoned from Chittagong and informed us that shiploads of weapons have arrived from West Pakistan. The Bengalee porters of the port refused to unload this cargo and built barricades on the street. To prevent them the army shot at them at random.

There is a two-day-old stubble on Rumi's unshaven face. Clutching a handful of his hair, he said: "You know Mother, the Mujib-Yahya talks are bound to fail. It is only a Pakistani ploy to gain time. They will never give us independence on a platter. We will have to win it through armed struggle."

I shuddered. "What are you talking about? The Pakistani army has got all the latest weapons. What would you fight them with?"

In an excited voice Rumi replied, "Exactly, I fully agree with you. Sheikh Mujib is going to the President's House everyday in his white car flying the black flag, but there is no progress in the talks. Meanwhile, thousands of Pakistani troops are landing in plain clothes at the airport and ships loaded with weapons are anchoring at Chittagong port. At the same time the so-called Bengalee heroes armed with bamboo staves are marching to Bangabandhu's house to salute him. After returning home they have a feast of rice and fish and take a siesta with the satisfaction of having done their duty. At the Paltan grounds, they are parading with dummy rifles. Are we still living in a land of fairy tales? There must be a limit to naivety."

"What is the solution then?"

"I don't see any, Mother."

A cold wave of fear and terror ran down my spine. "No, no, don't say that. You are saying that only because you don't support Sheikh's political moves. You hot-blooded young people are itching for a fight. Sheikh is guiding the movement in the right direction. Even if the talks with Yahya fail, the non-violent, non-cooperation movement will lead us to our goal."

"Mother, you are still living in a fool's paradise. Just look at these few facts—whatever has happened to East Pakistan is directed against the Pakistan Central Government. In normal times these would have been considered acts of high treason. The President of the country is in Dhaka but East Bengal is following

the directives of Sheikh Mujib. Offices, courts and banks do not obey the Government. They obey Sheikh. Then look at the humiliation of the Pakistani government. Tikka Khan could not become the governor because no judge agreed to give him the oath. He had to be satisfied with the post of Martial Law Administrator. The President landed in Dhaka and there was a demonstration in front of his house. No Bengalee is selling any foodstuff to the armed forces any more. They are virtually surviving on bread and water. They even had to get food from West Pakistan by plane. In the face of acts of such defiance the Yahya government has been extremely tolerant. Don't you see why? They are only buying time. These discussions are nothing but eyewash. The Sheikh is too late. This is not the way of survival."

I was getting impatient. I said, "Go shave and take a cold shower. That will cool you down." Rumi got up to go to his room. I was quite demoralised, as if I had lost all strength. . . .

I was fast asleep. Suddenly I woke up at a very loud sound. Rumi and Jami came rushing to our room. "What's the matter?" Deafening sounds of heavy guns, the intermittent sounds of machine guns, the whistling sound of bullets filled the air. The tracer balloons brightened the sky. We all ran up to the roof. South of our house, across the playground, are the University Students' dormitories—Iqbal Hall, Mohsin Hall and a few other buildings of the University quarters. All the noise came from that direction. There were screams of anguish and heartrending cries of the victims along with the sound of weapons. We could not stay there for long because of the sparks. Rumi quickly lowered the black flag and that of independent Bangladesh.

Suddenly I remembered that Barek and Kasem were in the outhouse on the ground floor. We all rushed down. As soon as we opened the wooden door to the courtyard our Alsatian dog Mickey rushed in and started moaning pathetically and rolling on the ground. I called Barek and Kasem. They came in quickly. I told them to bring their beds and sleep in the drawing room.

Mickey refused to move out of the room. It seems that all the noise of the guns and the light of the tracer balloons had badly shaken him. Rumi lovingly patted his head and said: "Don't be afraid, Mickey. You will stay with us upstairs." But he refused to go upstairs either. He was looking for a corner. Finally he crept into a dark corner under the staircase and curled up quietly there.

I lifted the receiver. The phone was dead. Hearing Baba's voice, Rumi was holding his hands and telling him something in a whisper.

There was no sleep for the rest of the night. I went upstairs again. There was fire visible at a distance. We could still hear the sound of the different types of guns, big and small. The tracer balloons continued to inflame the sky. There were sounds of people crying for help all around. The pillars of fire were getting bigger and higher in the North, South, East, and West.

Nobody uttered a word. Rumi and Jami opened up the polythene packets and unloaded the contents into the commode, a little at a time lest it got blocked,

and then pulled the flush. Jami washed the mortars and pestles very carefully with dish-washing powder to remove the smell of chemicals.

After that, Rumi packed all his books on Marx, Engels as well as Mao Tse Tung's military writings into a polythene bag. We did not know where to keep them. We didn't want to bury them underground because it would spoil the books. Then I remembered a gap between Barek's room and the boundary wall. We threw the packets of books in there as soon as the faint light of dawn appeared on the horizon. Rumi covered the packet with a few dried fronds of palm.

Friday, 26th March, 1971

At six o'clock in the morning I heard a faint voice calling me. I ran to the window and looked out nervously. I saw Kamal Aatur Rahman, curled up under a tree in the garden. Kamal is an Honours student at the Dhaka University and stays in the Mohsin Hall. I rushed down and opened the door. Rumi and Jami helped me to bring the semi-conscious Kamal indoors. He had spent the night with a few other students in a bathroom in the Hall. Due to the bright tracer balloons he did not dare to come out at night. As soon as the morning light appeared they all left the bathroom and fled in different directions.

After some nursing and breakfast, Kamal felt a little better. We switched on the radio. After recitation of the Holy Quran only one piece of music was being played over and over again—the instrumental rendering of a popular patriotic song. At 7 o'clock in the morning I went to our neighbor, Dr. A. K. Khan's place to use their telephone but it was also dead. Gradually some more faces appeared at the windows of our neighborhood. There was terror on every face. Everybody had spent the night awake and nobody knew what was really happening. All the telephones were dead. . . .

At 9 o'clock, the instrumental music suddenly stopped and a harsh voice was heard on the radio. Curfew was announced all over the city until further orders. People were also reminded of the punishment for violating curfew. Martial law was announced and all the articles of the martial law were read out. The announcements were made in Urdu first and then in English. The pronunciation, style and accent betrayed the Army background of the announcer. Probably the military government could not find any more suitable person at this time.

Curfew for an indefinite period! Even without curfew nobody would dare to go out amidst the shootings and firings. There was no end to the sound of the gun shots. The pillars of fire were getting bigger and bigger and now we could see them from our windows. The dark smoke covered a large part of the bright blue sky over the city.

Mickey continued his moaning all morning. His Alsatian nature had been changed by the sound of non-stop gun-shots. We all in turn tried to cheer him up and feed him but to no avail. . . .

Just before evening the electricity went off. Our cup of misery was full to the brim. There was some respite in the sound of gun shots. Mickey also appeared

somewhat more composed. He went out and sat on his favorite wooden box in the left of the courtyard. He also ate some food.

I took out some candles and lit them. I placed them at different places on the ground floor and the top floor. Berek and Kasem have stayed indoors the whole of today. In the evening I told them to bring their beds into the guest room and asked them not to go out into the courtyard at night. Gratefully, they brought their beds inside. I felt as if we were all sitting in Noah's Ark. . . .

It is hard to get the BBC. . . . All India Radio has so far only said that there are troops on the streets in Dhaka and nothing more. Dhaka TV station is closed. There was nothing to do and so we had early dinner. As we were leaving the dining room, Rumi suddenly remarked: "Mickey is rather quiet. Looks like he has finally overcome the shock."

Jami said: "We should bring him inside."

We opened the door and went to the courtyard. In the flickering candlelight we saw Mickey lying in the courtyard. He was dead.

Saturday, 27th March, 1971

The sound of gun shots, pillars of fire and clouds of smoke kept us awake last night also. There was some relief in the morning. The noise stopped for a little while. People started peeping out of their doors. Berek and Kasem opened the main door and stepped out. Soon they ran back and said: "Madam, there are people and traffic on the road."

I was surprised because there had been no announcement of lifting of the curfew in the radio. It is 7:30 now. I quickly raised the volume of the radio and went to my room to change.

At 8:30 after breakfast as soon as the lifting of the curfew was announced on the radio, Rumi and I went out in the car. Kamal left for his brother's place. Jami stayed home with his grandfather. Sharif said, "I will take a rickshaw and go to Banka's place."

I suggested, "Rumi, let's go to Mother's place first and then to the hospital."

Rumi said, "Mother, I will need the car for a couple of hours."

"Okay, but before that let us finish the important errands."

Near the vegetable and fruit market, Rumi suddenly stepped on the brake pedal and the car stopped with a screech. He cried out: "Oh my God!"

We found the entire market burnt to ashes. Coils of smoke were still rising from the glowing embers. I screamed: "Look! Look! There are charred human bodies!"

Rumi switched on the ignition and pressed the accelerator. He said, "Mother, don't look there." He took a turn to the right toward Mirpur. . . .

Before entering the hospital Rumi again cried out: "Oh God!" and stopped the car. The Shaheed Minar was razed to the ground. All the pillars had been pounded with heavy guns. There were tears in my eyes. What had they done? They had desecrated the Martyr's memorial that was raised in memory of the

students who were killed during the Bengali Language movement in 1952. There were troops guarding the area with combat helmets on their heads covered with net. I whispered to Rumi: "Let's move. There isn't much time."

After parking the car we ran along the long corridor of the hospital. It was crowded. Some had come with their injured friends and relations, some in search of their near and dear ones. Many people had taken shelter in the Hospital corridor. As we were climbing the stairs we saw Anisa Begum, widow of Professor Hai of the Bangalee Department; her daughter Haseen Jahan; her elder brother with his wife and others. They were all standing in the corridor. Anisa and Haseen Jahan embraced me and started weeping. Prof. Hai had died in a train accident a few years ago, but his family was allowed to stay in the university quarters in a flat in building No. 34 besides the Shaheed Minar. Haseen Jahan in a sobbing voice said: "Aunty, soldiers entered our building and killed Professor Moniruzzaman. Professor Jotirmoy is badly injured."

I was shocked. I asked, "Is it Professor Moniruzzaman of the Bengalee Department?"

"No, he was from the Department of Statistics. There is blood everywhere in our building, Aunty." . . .

As we entered our house . . . Sharif brought some news about the events of the last two nights. . . . The University Cafeteria which has traditionally been the centre of student politics is no longer there. The owner Modhu has been shot dead and the canteen has been burnt. Besides Prof. Moniruzzaman of the Statistics Department, many other professors have been killed, including Dr. G. C. Dev, Dr. F. R. Khan, Dr. A. Muktadir. The Calcutta radio announced the deaths of Prof. Nilima Ibrahim and Begum Sufia Kamal. When I heard it could not check my tears. . . .

I felt dizzy. I went upstairs and lay down. Tears rolled down my cheeks. After a little while Rumi came and sat near me. He held my hand and said, "You don't even have the whole picture, Mother."

I looked at him and asked: "What do you mean?"

"I have visited only a few places and talked to some people. Nobody has the complete picture. I am trying to piece together all the information and it will be quite some time before we have the composite picture. I suspect that the situation is much more horrifying and gruesome than it looks."

I cried out aloud. In a choked voice I said, "I don't want to know any more. Whatever I have known so far is breaking my heart. Oh God! What curse have you brought upon us? Are they human beings or beasts?"

"They are worse than beasts, Mother. They won't have a place even in Hell for what they have done."

[From Jahanara Imam, *Ekatterer Dinguli* (lit. "The Days of Seventy-One"), trans. Mustafizur Rahman as *Of Blood and Fire* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1989), 36-48.]

Poetic Laments: Shamsur Rahman,
Jasim Uddin, Sufia Kamal

The Liberation War inspired some of the most moving poetry of Bangladeshi history. Presented below are selections from three of the most famous poets of the country: Shamsur Rahman, Jasim Uddin, and Sufia Kamal.

Shamsur Rahman (1929–2006), journalist, radio broadcaster, and political commentator, was at the time of his death also the leading poet of the nation. From 1963 until 2006 he published more than fifty collections of poetry, numerous novels, and several collections of his news columns. His poems on the Liberation War were so inspiring that they were recited in the camps of the freedom fighters.

The following poem, “Uddhār,” was written in August 1971.

SALVATION

At times from my porch
I used to see the beautiful full-grown rose;
I used to watch the shadows softening the summer's heat,
I used to stare at the Buddha sculpted in wood
Sitting on my shelf.
And I thought how all my years I have
Hated war and yearned for peace.
When my little girl sits in a corner,
And with great care dresses her dolls,
And seeing the toy-bear dance bursts into peals of laughter,
Drives the dinky little cars, the puffing locomotive
All over the room, I am persuaded that
I am against war and have always been
For peace.
At the end of the long day after her endless chores
The lady of the house lies down beside me
Overcome by fatigue, her very presence revives
Without exchange of any words a shared past of ineffable charm.
And I am once again convinced that I am against war
And have prized peace all my life.
War I have abhorred all my life,
The rattle of the swords has ever sent
Blood coursing madly through my veins.
My father was a skilled hunter and yet I have never shot
A single bird with an eager gun.
No, not on the river banks
Not on the lake teeming with wild ducks.
From the prow of a boat or, standing neck-deep

In the ice-cold water, truly speaking
 I've never handled a live cartridge.
 I am not a Gandhiite
 But have always dreaded violence.
 Whenever war breaks out I am plunged into despair.
 All my life I have detested war—
 For, as they say,
 Famine and pestilence, like the mythical horseman
 Follow in the wake of war.
 The young, the old, the hapless women
 Tumble down the precipice into the canyon of death.
 The tree of eternal values is uprooted by its ancient roots.
 Doom blows its ram's horn throughout the blighted land:
 How I have hated war all my life.
 Yet in this stricken city under alien occupation
 Ask any old man who has lost his son,
 Ask any young maiden raped by the soldiery,
 Ask the newly-widowed worn out by her endless tears,
 Ask the poet struck dumb by unbearable agony,
 Ask him, who, beholding the heap of Bengalee dead,
 Mutters to himself constantly
 Now bursting into demented laughter
 Now into unprovoked tears,
 Or, finally ask the lonely child
 Of our desolate, silenced neighborhood
 Who lost its mother in a hail of bullets,
 And now wanders aimlessly hither and thither.
 Alas, ask all the peaceable gentlefolk,
 And today they will all declare
 With one voice—
 "In war alone lies salvation."

[From *The Devotee, the Combatant: Selected Poems of Shamsur Rahman*,
 trans. Syed Najmuddin Hashim (Dhaka: Pathak Shamabesh, 2000), 70–75.]

Jasim Uddin (1903–1976), a poet and litterateur originally from Faridpur, was known as the *palli-kabi*, or folk poet, of Bangladesh, for he wrote about rural Bengal with its village life, folk traditions, shared Hindu–Muslim culture, poverty, and agricultural hardships. He published sixteen volumes of poetry, and was an ardent socialist and nationalist. In 1967, after the Indo-Pakistan War, when the Pakistan government, equating Bengali, Hindu, and Indian culture, attempted to stop the broadcasting in East Pakistan of Rabindranath Tagore's songs, he protested boldly.

The following poem describes the fate in the 1971 war of a wooden chariot used in Krishna's Ratha Jatra festival in the village of Dhamrai, Dacca district.

THE CHARIOT OF DHAMRAI

The Chariot of Dhamrai, engraved so beautifully
 Over how many years by what old carpenter of ancient times
 Whose skilled hands took hold of the blade
 And curved over the hard wood
 Images of fairies and flowers and forests,
 In front of the chariot, a pair of horses
 Are on the run from time immemorial,
 They are still running and have not stopped ever since
 Then came the folk painter whose touch of fine brush
 Brought down from heaven many gods and goddesses
 And encaged them on the body of the Chariot
 With the magic color and lines to live forever.
 What a great consolation he has created
 On the body of this mortal world!
 Krishna is leaving Mathura, the milkmaids
 Lay underneath the Chariot wheels
 Begging Lord of Love, do not leave us in pretence.
 And this beloved Radha, alas, her sorrows
 Surpassing years and years
 Are still pouring forth through the lines
 Of the rural painter.

Twice a year fairs were held around the Chariot
 Shops and stalls and circus parties
 Gathered on those occasions
 To the tune of gazi songs;
 Accompanied by the sweet sound of earthen drums
 Many kings and queens used to roam about.
 And they created the atmosphere of glorious deeds,
 In the folk tunes the ideology of morality and justice
 Soothed the ears of young and old,
 Who was the enchanter who built this temple out of scanty wood?
 What depth of affection evoked from his heart
 That millions of people made pilgrimage to see the Chariot
 And light the lamp of devotion?
 The guardians of Pakistan in the guise of false saviours
 Burnt this beautiful Chariot down to ashes.
 What a great consolation for generations and generations
 For the work that had come from the hands of the artist.
 What barbarian destroyed the solace forever!

[From *Selected Poems of Jasim Uddin*, trans. Hasna Jasimuddin
 Moudud (Dhaka: Oxford University Press, 1975), 49–50.]

Sufia Kamal (1911–1999) was born in Barisal to an aristocratic family. She spoke Urdu at home, learned Bengali on the side, and was brought up in purdah. She met and was inspired by Gandhi and Nazrul, and was lifelong friends with Jasim Uddin, Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, Subhas Chandra Bose, Sheikh Mujib, and Rabindranath Tagore. In her adulthood she joined her cousin Rokeya Hossain's Muslim Women's Association, and became involved in the Shanti Committee, to promote Hindu–Muslim friendship. During the 1971 war she kept a poetic diary, “Where My Darlings Lie Buried,” some of the poems from which were broadcast from Calcutta.

The poem chosen below is the signature poem from that collection, “Mor Yāduder Samādhi Pare,” written on December 27, following the liberation of Bangladesh on December 16.

WHERE MY DARLINGS LIE BURIED

The shivering cold nights of wintry *Poush*⁵ have passed.
 And now dewdrops of a morning
 are like tears shed by mothers, sisters, widows,
 as they gaze forlorn at the mounds
 where their darlings lie buried.
 For the last nine months
 the soil of this land was drenched with bubbling blood.
 And now the fecund earth
 lies under the warm and golden sun,
 and brings forth her dower of flowers of the season.
 There is a smell of ripening harvest in the air.
 Drowsy with this atmosphere,
 or through sheer weariness,
 our dear ones have dropped off to sleep.
 No, I shall not disturb them in their slumber.
 I shall leave for them, instead,
 a kiss on the green mounds.
 As I touch the grass tenderly
 I seem to feel the clasp of millions of eager hands,
 and millions of merry voices speak to me:
 “Don’t you feel proud of us, Mother,
 that we have liberated our Bangladesh?”
 Ah, my daredevil darlings, that you have indeed done—
 In the comity of nations
 you have indeed laid out for your Mother Bangla
 a bright carpet,
 dyed with your ruby-red blood.
 Now, and through the ages,
*Mahakal*⁶—the great God of time—
 will stand at attention to pay you homage

for the marvel you have done.
 Ah, our dear ones, you are deathless!
 [From Sufia Kamal, *Mother of Pearls and Other Poems*, ed. Sajed
 Kamal, trans. Kshitish Roy (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 2001), 135.]

AFTER 1971: THE AWAMI LEAGUE GOVERNMENT AND THE FAILURE OF AN IDEAL

The exhilaration over the birth of Bangladesh was real, but short-lived. Sheikh Mujib was returned via London and Delhi to Dhaka (officially renamed from Dacca) on January 10, 1972, after ten months in jail and near-execution in West Pakistan. He and Indira Gandhi pledged undying friendship between their two countries, and Mujib thanked India for harboring ten million refugees during the Liberation War. From the beginning, Mujib vowed that the four guiding principles of state policy would be nationalism, socialism, democracy, and secularism (see the Preamble to the Constitution below). By “secularism” he indicated that he meant to abandon Pakistan’s conception of a Muslim state; indeed, he banned the Jamaat-e Islami party, and had the support, within the Awami League membership itself, of all minorities except tribals in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, who had never identified with Pakistan as an idea or with the struggle for independence from the western wing.

ABUL MANSUR AHMAD: THE LAHORE RESOLUTION RESTORED

For many, the emergence of Bangladesh was the vindication of an ideal cherished since the 1940 Lahore Resolution, which had called not for an independent state but for independent Muslim-majority states to be carved out of British India. One eloquent spokesperson for this view was Abul Mansur Ahmad (1898–1979), a renowned litterateur, lawyer, journalist, and Bengali statesman, who held prominent posts in the United Front cabinet under Fazlul Huq and in the Awami League government of Prime Minister Suhrawardy. He spent four years in prison during Ayub Khan’s imposition of martial law from 1958 to 1962. Famed for his satirical writing, he was a pioneer in progressive journalism, and promoted secularism.

The following statement was written in March 1972.

At first sight the emergence of independent Bangladesh may seem to be an act of disruption. Obviously it has broken Pakistan into two pieces. To break up an organic unity, whatever the motive or necessity, is an undesirable phenomenon. . . . Fortunately that is only a superficial view of the matter. . . . What the recent tragic events in Bangladesh have proven is not the failure of the plan designed by our political forebears but of the deviation from that plan.

So we need not be ashamed of our forebears but should be proud of them. That plan was such a well thought out and farsighted one that any deviation therefrom was bound to prove fatal. So the emergence of independent Bangladesh became inevitable. It has but logically followed. It is just an end of a betrayal. . . .

The formula [that led to Partition] was based on the famous Lahore Resolution of the Muslim League passed in 1940, which was subsequently known and observed as the Pakistan Resolution. It was so known, despite the fact that there was no mention of the word “Pakistan” within the four corners of the Resolution. . . . Whereas the Lahore Resolution visualized independent “states” in two zones, Pakistan was constituted as one single State with its capital at Karachi situated in the Western zone. . . . The Muslims in their rejoicings, the Hindus in their sorrowful but dignified resignation, and the British Govt. in their proud sense of impartiality, all heaved a sigh of relief that the apparently never-ending Hindu–Muslim dispute that was plaguing the political life of India has now been permanently solved, enabling both to start a fresh life of democratic progress and prosperity.

That hope, however, has not been fulfilled. This failure was due to two deviations in Pakistan: one internal, the other external. Both ultimately proved to be fatally suicidal betrayals. The internal one was a deviation from the Lahore Resolution. The external one was a deviation from the Spirit of Partition.

As regards the internal deviation, . . . Qaid could, if he so wanted, have set up two Govts. for the two regions, making himself Governor-General of both, spending six months in Karachi and six month at Dacca. He did not. As a result, all state powers including those of the East wing along with those of the provinces, naturally centered about the father of the new State. . . . This was evidently an unreal situation which could give East Pakistanis, incidentally the majority of Pakistanis, only a colonial position to be ruled from a foreign territory. The natural adverse consequences that were inevitably to follow from such flagrant ignorance of geographic reality seem to have been overlooked by all the successive rulers of Pakistan, who were mostly West Pakistani or dictatorial or both. . . .

The external betrayal was equally suicidal. . . . The successors of Qaid-i-Azam . . . started harping on “Islamic state” of Pakistan and of “Muslim nationhood” instead of a secular democratic Pakistan and a Pakistani nationhood. They fell willing or unwilling victims to their own deceptive propaganda carried on both before and after the creation of Pakistan. . . . As political propaganda . . . this demand for Pakistan very soon gave rise to an almost universal, though mistaken, notion that the proposed Muslim state was surely going to be a theocracy instead of a secular democracy and that the proposed scheme was going to be a communal division of India. . . . The result was that the Hindu–Muslim problem was not solved, but aggravated. The minorities of both the states became helpless. From a communal problem it grew into an international one. What was a clash between Hindus and Muslims, the Congress and the

League yesterday, has become a clash between India and Pakistan today. . . . The net result is that the Partition of India has utterly failed to solve the Hindu-Muslim problem. . . .

If and when . . . West Pakistan (now Pakistan) gracefully acknowledges the reality and recognizes Bangladesh and adopts a secular democracy instead of harping on the transparent hypocrisy of "Islamic ideology" and "Muslim nationhood," the political super-structure of the sub-continent will have been fully restored, as wisely visualized in the Lahore Resolution. That would be the first step towards the establishment of lasting peace in this area. . . .

The sub-continent in that event will compose of three friendly and cooperating neighbors, viz. Bangladesh, Bharat, and Pakistan, all respecting and guaranteeing one another's sovereignty and territorial integrity. This will have permanently solved the Hindu-Muslim problem, which had been and still is plaguing the body politic of the sub-continent as a cancerous disease. The Non-Muslims of Bangladesh and Pakistan, and the Muslims of Bharat, will live as honorable citizens exercising all political and social rights equally with the majority communities of their respective States, as all three will have become secular democratic states. In the language of Qaid-i-Azam: "Hindus will cease to be Hindus and Muslims will cease to be Muslims,"—of course, politically. Along with it defense expenditures of all the three will be reduced to the minimum. A joint defense system may be possible. . . . A common market in the line of the European common market may be found attractive. Even Afghanistan, Nepal, Ceylon, and Burma may ultimately join such an economic league. A through train from Peshawar to Chittagong as dreamt by our great leader Suhrawardy, may turn out to be a reality.

[From Abul Mansur Ahmad, "Preface," *End of a Betrayal and Restoration of Lahore Resolution* (Dacca: Khoshroz Kitab Mahal, 1975), 1-7, 9-11, 17-18. Slightly emended for English usage by R. F. McDermott.]

BADRUDDIN UMAR: A LEFTIST CRITIQUE OF THE CONSTITUTION

The optimism evinced by Ahmad's vision of the future for South Asia was not shared by all political commentators of the mid-1970s. An example of a stinging critique of Sheikh Mujib and his Awami League constitution is the voice of Badruddin Umar (b. 1930), noted Bangladeshi political scientist, politician, and voluminous essayist (he has written nearly seventy books, in English and Bengali). The son of Abul Hashim, a politician who supported Sarat Chandra Bose and Huseyn Suhrawardy's bid for a united Bengal in 1947, Umar has followed his father's communist tendencies by becoming one of Bangladesh most fiercely left-minded intellectuals. In the 1970s Umar wrote a series of radical articles, of which the following is a part, in the Dhaka periodical *Holiday*, chronicling political developments in East Pakistan and then in the new state of Bangladesh.

The following class-analysis of Mujib's "four pillars" was written on October 22, 1972.

THE PROPOSED CONSTITUTION: A FUNDAMENTAL MEASURE
AGAINST SOCIALISM, DEMOCRACY, SECULARISM,
AND NATIONALISM

A constitution for Bangladesh has been proposed by the Constituent Assembly by the Awami League government. Since there is very little to distinguish between the Awami League Parliamentary Party and the Constituent Assembly it can be said with certainty that with minor changes here and there the proposed constitution will become the fundamental law of our land within a very short period of time. . . .

In the preamble of the draft constitution, nationalism, socialism, democracy, and secularism have been proclaimed as the fundamental principles of state policy. And the 153 articles of the constitution are supposed to be the fundamental guiding rules of that policy. But in spite of this claim of the Awami League government it can be clearly shown that these articles have been framed very carefully to frustrate all the aspirations of our fighting people. It can also be shown that the provisions of the proposed constitution are, in fact, a very substantial measure against the fundamental principles which they have proclaimed in the preamble.

It will be better if we begin with socialism. There is a "pious" declaration in Article 10 regarding the establishment of socialism but nowhere in the constitution is there to be found any declaration to the effect that private property will be gradually abolished. Even to a stark idiot it is clear that any constitution which does not provide for the total abolition of private property cannot have any claim to socialism. . . . In the context of what has actually been provided for private property in the various articles of the constitution it sounds like [an] "ownership of everything belongs to God"—type of provision as it obtained in the Pakistani constitution of 1956 and also in the infamous Ayub constitution of 1962. Previously, during the Pakistani period, all property belonged to God in an abstract manner and actually "the servants of God" used to exploit and appropriate the fruits of the labour of the toiling masses. Here also the draft constitution has assigned in a general and abstract manner ownership of the machineries and means of production to the people, while providing enormous scope for the expansion of private interests and property and for exploitation of the people by the ruling classes, the "servants of the people." . . .

The draft contains bombastic expressions like "agrarian revolution" and "liberation of the workers and peasants" but refrains from saying anything regarding [the] abolition of feudal relations and of private property in land or about [any] fundamental change in the land system. In this context the declarations concerning the rights and welfare of the peasantry (Articles 14–16) are nothing else but an empty exercise in political propaganda. . . .

And here we find the demolition of the third fundamental principle—democracy.

In Article 63 (3) a very extraordinary provision has been inserted with consummate cleverness. Lumping together war, aggression, and armed revolt it has

been provided in the Article that for public safety and protection of the state the Parliament will be able to exact any law and during such enactments the various other provisions of the constitution will not, in any manner, restrain the Parliament from making such laws. Or, in other words, under that kind of situation the constitution will stand suspended! Who has ever heard of a constitution like this? It even puts to shame the much-criticized Article 16 of de Gaulle's Constitution of the Fifth Republic which was framed under the shadow of their Algerian war. . . .

Apart from this extraordinary Article there are quite a number of other ones in which the constitution grants fundamental rights to the people almost invariably with conditions. And for the inclusion of these conditions such rights of the people are nothing but paper rights. What they have proposed to give to the people with their right hand, they have attempted to take away with their left hand. . . .

And in that kind of situation what will happen to secularism? If by secularism is meant that the government of Bangladesh will not declare this state as an Islamic state then certainly Bangladesh will remain a secular state. Because in future no one, not even the exploiting classes, can gain anything, politically or otherwise, by that declaration. But if by secularism is meant that the government will not make any political use of religion (Article 12c) then it can be said with certainty that Bangladesh will not remain a secular state. How can any government which has not the slightest regard for any other fundamental right normally enjoyed by citizens of a democratic state be democratic enough not to create contradictions among the people which are politically profitable? Is it not a fact that in spite of the demolition of the social basis of communalism the latter survives at the level of superstructure? If that be so, then the secularism of the present government will necessarily consist not in trying to eliminate religion from political life but to encourage and keep alive all sorts of religious practices of all sorts of religion and then suitably play one religious community against another according to the needs of the situation. And since such practices are never done legally and openly they will be done conspiratorially and secretly. But above all the constitution actually envisages a political system in which not only the government in power but also other communal elements in the opposition will try to act in the same secret and conspiratorial manner whenever and wherever it would suit their purpose. Are we not witnessing that phenomenon here in Bangladesh even after such a bitter and arduous struggle against our national enemies?

[From Badruddin Umar, *Politics and Society in East Pakistan and Bangladesh* (Dacca: Mowla Brothers, 1974), 211–217.]

MAULANA BHASHANI: ISLAMIC SOCIALISM AND THE EXAMPLE OF MAO TSE TUNG

Sheikh Mujib was indeed a better insurgent than he was a peace-time leader. Even though Mujib's idea of socialism was democratic rather than Marxist, Umar did cor-

rectly predict some of the problems that plagued the Awami League government in its first three years in power, 1972 to 1975. Mujib did not resolve law-and-order problems, did not respond well to the human misery caused by famines and floods, was widely believed to be authoritarian, corrupt, and nepotistic, and handled opposition by declaring a state of emergency in December 1974. In January 1975 he took all political power into his own hands, amended the Constitution to make himself president, and limited the powers of the judiciary and the freedom of the press. His numerous, vociferous critics were led by Maulana Bhashani, then in his eighties, who championed Islamic socialism. Along with other Islamic parties, he attacked Mujib's Awami League government and its pro-India stance. The relatively innocuous friendship treaty with Indira Gandhi proved a terrible liability for Mujib.

Bhashani, popularly known as *Mazlūm Jananētā* ("Leader of the Oppressed"), is the patron saint of leftists in Pakistan and Bangladesh, the closest one gets in these countries to communism in a revered political leader. Trained both by a Sufi *ṭīr* [teacher] and at Deoband, noted for its progressive views and commitment to social welfare, Bhashani had three lifelong ideological commitments: to class politics and the uplift of the downtrodden, to the socially emancipatory element in Islam, and to Bengali nationalism and autonomy. A seven-week trip to then-Peking in 1963 left him enthusiastic about Chinese socialism; back in East Pakistan, in return for Ayub's support of his political party, he helped the Pakistani leader better his relations with Communist China.

In 1968 he penned a short booklet called "*Māo Tse Tung'er Deshe*" ("In the Country of Mao Tse Tung"), in which he described his amazement at the social leveling achieved by the socialist philosophy. The following excerpt is from its opening.

We speak of our country as bounteous in water, fruits, rice, and vegetation. But day by day the deep green is fading fast from our country. When I got off the plane at the Peking airport I saw a great mass of green. On each side of the road going into the city from the airport there are lakhs and lakhs of trees, almost all of which have been newly planted. It was my impression that within ten years those trees will be worth millions of taka. In my travels to the provincial areas within China I have seen huge industries of tree plantations throughout whole regions. I have heard that in the last fourteen years seventy million people have planted two hundred million trees. In the last ten years the natural appearance of the entire country has been changed. . . .

Here in our country and right before leaving it I heard that in a communist country there is no individualism, nor any individual life or dignity. The Communist Party has sacrificed individual independence on the stake of collectivism. In socialist countries like Russia and China each person is only a screw in the large state machine. One cannot speak openly in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. However, having visited China I now see that there was never a bigger lie. Outside their places of work, whether one is a rickshaw puller or a university chancellor, it is not possible to recognize one Chinese

person as different from another. The self-respect and dignity that Mao Tse Tung and his Chinese revolutionaries have given is totally unthinkable in our country.

Let me tell you about an incident that will make what I have been saying easier to understand. After getting sick I had to spend a few days at the Union Hospital in Peking. The Prime Minister, Chou En-lai, came to see me there. He had in his hands a bunch of flowers. When he entered my cabin a male nurse was seated, talking to me. He was off-duty at the time, and was smoking as we talked. As is the custom in our country, I frantically hurried to get up and greet the Prime Minister. But Chou En drew up a chair and sat down and asked about my health. He stayed and talked with me for about half an hour. During that whole time the male nurse neither got up from his seat nor extinguished his cigarette. Moreover, he did not even seem that interested that the Prime Minister Chou En-lai was sitting in the chair next to him. I did not see even in one word the sort of effort to show respect to a chief minister that one would expect according to the custom prevalent in our country. To me, his conduct seemed not only unbecoming but even insulting. When the Prime Minister and the nurse had left, I called the young superintendent of the hospital and narrated the whole incident to him. My voice perhaps indicated the anger I felt. After listening to me, the superintendent smiled. He said, Chairman Mao and Prime Minister Chou—they are not only our leaders and rulers; they are our friends.

Even after this, should I believe that in socialist countries there is no dignity of the individual, no liberty of the individual?

[From Saiyad Ābul Maksud, *Maolānā Ābdul Hāmid Khān Bhāsānī* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1994), 649–650. Trans. R. F. McDermott.]

NIRMALENDU GOON: LAMENTING THE FALL OF SHEIKH MUJIB

Bhashani did not share China's political philosophy; what resonated for him in the Chinese social project was the equality between humans that Islam also preached. Marx and Islam could meet in social justice, he felt, or in his brand of Islamic socialism. This is why, when he revived the National Awami Party after independence had been achieved in February 1972, he called Mujib's government to account for failing in its stated goal of promoting social and economic liberation for the poor.

The Awami League government did not, in fact, live up to anyone's expectations. In August 1975 Mujib and all the members of his family except for his daughters Hasina and Rehana, who were away in Germany at the time, were murdered in their home by a group of army officers. His party collapsed, and the reins of government were taken up by a career military man, Ziaur Rahman (1936–1981). Since 1975 the military has played a major role in Bangladeshi politics.

Few grieved for Sheikh Mujib as the leader of the country, but many mourned the loss of the vision and hope that his leadership had promised in 1972 and feared for

the future of democracy and secularism under a military dictator. One such mourner was Nirmalendu Goon (b. 1945). Goon emerged as a poet in the 1960s, a period that witnessed the increasing separation between the neo-rich and the abjectly poor, and his poetry urges the overcoming of human barriers with love and a commitment to freedom. He was one of the few people to protest the assassination of Sheikh Mujib in a time when even mentioning his name was considered dangerous. After 1975 his poetry emphasized communist ideals, and since 1989, with the fall of the Soviet Union, his publications have breathed a more religious, mystical spirit.

In the following poem, *palash* and *krishnachura* are flowers that bloom in spring; the former is bloodred. *Samakal* was a literary periodical of the time.

I HAVEN'T COME TODAY TO ASK FOR BLOOD

Like everybody assembled here
I too am greatly greatly fond of roses.
Yesterday as I walked past the race-course
a rose from among all those roses urged me
to speak of Sheikh Mujib in my poems.
I have come today to speak of him.

Yesterday a blood-spotted brick that fell
off the Shaheed Minar
urged me to speak of Sheikh Mujib in my poems.
I have come here to speak of him.

Like everyone assembled here
I too am greatly fond of the *palash*.
Yesterday as I went past the *Samakal* office
a freshly blossomed *palash* whispered into my ears,
and asked me to speak of Sheikh Mujib in my poems.
I have come to speak of him.

The swirling fountain at Shahbagh
begged me in a stricken voice
to speak of Sheikh Mujib in my poems.
I have come to speak of him.

Like everyone assembled here
I too am partial to dreams,
in fact, I am in love with them.
A bold dream that I had in the small hours
of last night urged me to speak of Sheikh Mujib in my poems.
I have come to speak of him.

Let these grieving people assembled
 at the foot of the banyan tree be my witness.
 Let these dry broken unready *Krishnachura*
 buds hear this with all the secret warmth
 of their heart. Let this black cuckoo know it
 at this moment of gathering dusk.

With my feet firmly planted on this sacred soil
 I am doing today what the rose urged me to do;
 I am doing today what the *palash* asked me to do,
 I am doing what my dream urged me to do.

Today I haven't come to demand anybody's blood,
 I have come to speak of my love.

[From *Selected Poems of Nirmalendu Goon*, ed.
 Khondakar Ashraf Hossein and trans. Kabir Chowdhury
 (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 2001), 71–72.]

MILITARY RULE AND THE MOVE TO BANGLADESHI NATIONALISM, ISLAMIZATION, AND THE REHABILITATION OF “COLLABORATORS”

The period from 1975 to 1990 was marked by the authoritarian dictatorships of two military leaders, Ziaur Rahman and Hussain Muhammad Ershad (b. 1930). Of the two, Zia was the more popular, and the more successful: he was charismatic, and partially consolidated and rejuvenated Bengali society through his nineteen-point program of industrialization and development, which emphasized not socialism but agricultural expansion and a healthy rural economy, national self-sufficiency, public works, primary and adult education, and family planning.

One of Zia's biggest contributions was in foreign policy; after 1976 Bangladesh started to play a dynamic role in the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), and in 1980 Zia launched the South Asia Regional Conference (SARC)—to become the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation in 1985—among the seven countries of South Asia (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bhutan). Addressing nationalists' fears that Bangladesh was too reliant on Indian economic and military aid, Zia moved away from ties with the Soviet bloc, developed closer relations with the United States and Europe, took steps to normalize relations with Pakistan, and harmonized ties with Saudi Arabia and the People's Republic of China, who had not agreed to recognize the creation of Bangladesh until 1975.

He remained, however, under pressure to restore democracy, and after declaring himself president and then winning a referendum in 1978, he allowed

the functioning of democratic party politics; his own newly created party, the Bangladesh National Party (BNP), won an easy majority in the parliamentary elections of September 1979. At this point he formally lifted martial law, appointed Gen. Hussain Muhammad Ershad as his army chief, and became a civilian leader.

Other aspects of his leadership were not so liberal. By Zia's own admission, more than four hundred military officers were executed at his orders for suspected disloyalty; he did not attempt to punish Mujib's killers, instead pardoning them under an Indemnity Act; he rehabilitated individuals who had supported the Pakistani army, including several in his cabinet; he attempted to knit together all ethnic groups in the country by supporting Bangladeshi over Bengali nationalism; and he moved to de-secularize and re-Islamicize the government, reinstating the Jamaat-e Islami Party, which had been banned under Mujib. He was assassinated in Chittagong on May 30, 1981, in a military conspiracy yet to be fully understood but certainly fueled by his pardon of collaborators, which drew the ire of members of the Mukti Bahini, now in the army, and by his bloody purge of army personnel for supposed insubordination. After a brief stint under an elected caretaker government, another military coup, this one by Ershad, returned an army chief to power, in March 1982.

Ershad did not have Zia's charisma, and kept power in 1986 and 1988 by an obvious manipulation of the electoral system. He banned political parties, controlled the press, and imposed martial law. He continued Zia's Islamization program by maintaining mosques with government funds; declaring Friday to be a weekly holiday; making English and Arabic compulsory in primary schools; shifting the Islamic University to Dhaka; and increasing attempts to enhance cordial diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Yet Ershad was not liked, due to his autocratic suppression of civic freedoms, and by November 1987 mass uprisings and strikes by the opposition parties forced him to declare a state of emergency and to dissolve the Parliament. In April 1988 he lifted the emergency, allowed the Parliament to convene, and took the opportunity to get passed into law his Eighth Amendment, whereby Islam was declared the state religion. This brought his new party, the Jatiyo Party, closer in ideology to the Bangladesh National Party, the Jamaat-e Islami, and other smaller fundamentalist parties. Such a move did not, however, ensure the longevity of his rule, as the Jamaat did not find his initiatives sincere, and criticized him for his personal loyalty to a Sufi *pīr*. Furthermore, several high court justices declared his amendment to be unconstitutional. In 1990, after weeks of peaceful civil agitation, the Awami League and the Bangladesh National Party joined hands to oust him from power.

The five selections below—Syed Ali Ahsan on the lost opportunity of a united Pakistan, Zia's nineteen-point program, Khondakar Abdul Hamid on the value of Bangladeshi nationalism, changes under Zia and Ershad to the Constitution, and selections from Ghulam Azam on the virtues of Islamization—all speak to

the question of the relationship between religion and the state; implied in many of them as well is a discussion of the proper relation between Hindu and Muslim, India and Bangladesh.

*SYED ALI AHSAN: THE FAILED
CHANCE OF PAKISTAN*

It is important to remember that, in spite of near-ubiquitous patriotic zeal in Bangladesh after 1971, not everyone in the East Pakistan of 1947 to 1970 had wanted to see East and West Pakistan split apart. Indeed, after having realized their aspirations in 1947 for a separate, Muslim-majority state, many Bengali Muslims wanted the new country to succeed. Even though the inequities experienced by the eastern wing caused eventual disillusionment among many, eroding their commitment to a united Pakistan, the alternative to a West Pakistani military dictatorship was not necessarily seen as secularism or socialism. Nor was Islam, *per se*, perceived as the problem.

One can read pride in the new state, as well as a nostalgia for the failed potential of Pakistan, in the words of Syed Ali Ahsan (1920–2002), a poet, essayist, and scholar of Bengali language and culture who had worked for the formation of Pakistan while a student, and who spent six years teaching at Karachi University, in West Pakistan, during the 1950s. He then taught at various Bangladeshi universities after 1971, and was honored in 1989 with the post of National Professor.

The following thoughts date from 1977, when he was vice chancellor of Rajshahi University and chief minister of the country's Ministry of Cultural Affairs. His knowledge of area history enables him to argue forcefully for the distinctiveness of the region—by claiming, in what becomes a common trope, that India's West Bengal is culturally dissimilar.

Today the consciousness of our national existence is becoming more of a reality. We know ourselves chiefly as Bangladeshis. During the Pakistan era we did not build up this identity. Because of the great geographic distance we could not be one with the whole of Pakistan. Today we have gained a defined geographic existence, and this is also our national existence. Upon this has our sense of nationhood been constructed. There may be divisions of people in our country, as well as differences of religion, but we are all one, for in terms of national boundaries we are unavoidably Bangladeshis. . . .

At the time of the Pakistan movement, even though Mohammad Ali Jinnah spoke again and again of a Muslim nationhood, in his first speech as the leader of free Pakistan he emphasized a nationhood based on the land, not on religion. He clearly wanted Pakistani citizens to be known as Pakistanis, not as Muslims, Hindus, or Christians. Because of his health, Jinnah Saheb could not bring this type of nationhood into being. Moreover, the particular ingredients necessary to create such a nationhood were absent in Pakistan. One component is geographic unity. Pakistan did not have this. East Pakistan was geographically

cut off from West Pakistan. Another essential component is anthropological unity. This too did not exist. The third ingredient is linguistic unity. . . . Besides this, from a long time back various ethnic groups had appeared in the area of West Pakistan. Greeks came, Shakas came, Aryans came, Turks from Central Asia came, and hence lots of ethnic communities entered in this manner. . . . Thus there is no one nationhood in Pakistan anyway. . . .

In the Pakistan period, . . . the only bond was a religious one. As unfortunate as it is to admit, it is true that this religious bond was not sufficient to build mutual trust between people in the two areas of the country. Mutual trust comes from sacrifice, sensitivity, and support. None of this was present in either part of the country. Thus the idea of a religious nationhood was reduced to a falsity. As a result, until the end, a territorial nationhood could not arise. . . . It would have been possible if, in their own spheres both areas could have been made completely self-governing in arrangements for administrative and economic allotments. But from the first, the rulers of Pakistan placed more importance on the central government and made the provincial governments dependent upon the center. . . .

We see that in the case of Pakistan, a nationhood based on religion was not able to be transformed into one based on geography. . . . But today in Bangladesh we have achieved this geographic nationhood. From ancient time West Bengal has been cut off from the eastern areas. It was different in terms of peoples and climate. From an early period the west felt the influence of the Aryans, but since the eighth century [BCE] present-day Bangladesh was outside the Aryan vortex; people from here were refused participation in the Vedic sacrifices. In addition, from the eighth to the twelfth centuries [CE], present-day Bangladesh had its own independent geographic existence under the Buddhist Palas, with very similar borders to what now pertains. . . .

We can find pride in our borders.

[From Syed Ali Ahsan, "Bāngladeśī Jāṭiyatā," in *Āmāder Ātmaparicay eban Bāngladesī Jāṭiyatā* (Dhaka: Bad Publications, 1996), 69–73. Trans. R. F. McDermott.]

ZIAUR RAHMAN: THE NINETEEN-POINT PROGRAM

The nineteen-point program of Ziaur Rahman, which says nothing about a theocratic state, has become a bit of an embarrassment for the Bangladesh National Party of Zia's widow, Khaleda Zia (prime minister 1991–1996 and 2001–2006), whose power has depended in part upon its alliances with the Jamaat-e Islami and other Islamist support.

1. To preserve the independence, integrity and sovereignty of the State at all costs.
2. To reflect in all spheres of our nation's life the four fundamental principles of the Constitution, i.e., complete faith in and reliance on the Almighty

Allah, democracy, nationalism, and socialism, meaning economic and social justice.

3. To build ourselves into a self-reliant nation through all possible means.
4. To ensure people's participation at all levels of administration, development programmes, and in the maintenance of law and order.
5. To strengthen rural economy and thus the national economy by according priority to agricultural development.
6. To make the country self-sufficient in food and ensure that nobody has to starve.
7. To step up cloth production so as to ensure supply of at least coarse cloth for everybody.
8. To take all possible measures so that no one remains homeless.
9. To rid the country of the curse of illiteracy.
10. To ensure minimum medical care for everybody.
11. To place women at their rightful position in the society and to organise and inspire the youth for nation-building.
12. To give necessary incentives to the private sector for the economic development of the country.
13. To improve the condition of the workers and develop healthy employer-worker relations in the interest of increased production.
14. To create an urge for public service and nation-building among the government employees and improve their financial condition.
15. To check population explosion.
16. To build up friendship based on equality with all countries and especially strengthen the relations with the Muslim nations.
17. To decentralize the system of administration and development and strengthen local government.
18. To establish a social system based on justice and fair play and free from corruption.
19. To safeguard the rights of all citizens irrespective of religion, colour, and sect, and consolidate national unity and solidarity.

[From Abdul Latif Masoom, *Dilemmas of a Military Ruler: A Political Study of the Zia Regime* (Dhaka: Afsar Brothers, 2000), appendix C, 251–252.]

KHONDAKAR ABDUL HAMID: BENGALI VERSUS BANGLADESHI NATIONALISM

Although liberation from Pakistan had been achieved through a pro-Bengali platform that stressed the uniqueness of Bengali history, language, and culture, within a very few years the call was heard for a nationalism based not on Bengali but on Bangladeshi identity. The English term “Bangladeshi-ism,” as opposed to “Bengali-ism,” was

first coined by Abul Mansur Ahmad, but it was journalist-politician Khondakar Abdul Hamid (1918–1983) who argued for its political use in government policy. This type of nationalism resonated with Zia’s own proclivities; in his public speeches and policies, Zia began expounding Bangladeshi nationalism, and emphasizing the national role of Islam, as practiced by the majority of Bangladeshis. In opposition to Mujib’s secular Bangla, from the early 1970s the slogan “Muslim Bangla” came into vogue among right-wing advocates as a description of Bangladesh. Note, for contrast, that Ahsan, quoted above, also writing in the mid-1970s, used geography, not religion, to define Bangladeshi nationhood.

The following is an address given at the Bangla Academy on February 15, 1976.

WHAT IS NATIONALISM?

Nationalism is the nation state’s most important abstraction. . . .

In one nation there may be many ethnic groups, cultural groups, and religious groups. But they cannot remain cut off from the mainstream ideal of the national mood or from a perception of the nation’s integrity. If they remain cut off for too long and feel their aspirations blocked, they will become national minorities.

In other words, nationalism is: an unbreakable consciousness of and a great concern for the temper, blood, thoughts, passions and feelings, hopes, desires, culture, customs, and love for the country among a great family of people in an independent, universal nation. Wherever one sees these qualities together, one finds nationalism.

WHAT IS BENGALI NATIONALISM?

What is Bengali nationalism, exactly? In speaking of this, “multi-state nationalism” comes to mind, because there are lots of Bengalis outside Bangladesh; can we consider these Bengalis the same as those in Bangladesh? Without risking the question of mixed governments, could we conceive of this thing, pan-Bengalism or super-nationalism? No. And that is why we cannot name our nationalism “Bengali nationalism.” If we do so, there will be a technical mistake, and it will be politically dangerous.

There is something else. It is likely that people from Bangladesh, West Bengal, and other Bengali-speaking areas derive from the same stock. All may be Bengali-speakers. All may share the same food, and there may be some similarity between their customs and deportment. But are they one, without a difference, in culture, national essence, and country-feeling? Historians like Dr. R. C. Majumdar agree that the fundamental distinctions between the two, west and east, that existed thousands of years ago still exist. And in the historians’ opinion, the idea that both share one culture and one nationalism is by no means true.

There is a place called Rajbari-Bahar when the Padma and the Meghna Rivers meet, but in one body there is no actual fusion. In spite of flowing next to each other for one thousand years there is none. The Meghna's water is gritty black. The Padma's is always muddy. Between the Bangla of "this side" and "that side" there is always this separation. This difference consists of temper, blood, mind, thought, passion, experiences, religion, actions, worship customs, name, flags, heritage, inheritance laws, dress, etiquette, manners [*lehāj*], artistic conventions, and the feelings, stream, philosophy, and practices of life. For a long time there have been no bonds of heart-felt feeling between the two sides. Even the Bengali language, although originally one, outside the living rooms of the elite and the literature of the learned, the language of the people is different, like the difference between British and Yankee English. This is so much the case that in some places one country's speech is another's obscenity.

As a result, "Bengali nationalism" is not only wrong from a political perspective, it is also unrealistic from a historical perspective. Indeed, its worthlessness as a political suggestion is well known. "Bengali nationalism" is thus a misnomer.

BANGLADESHI NATIONALISM

Calling our nationalism "Bangladeshi," however, is appropriate and reasonable. Bangladesh is a single, universal, independent nation-state or race-rule. . . .

This nation proudly introduces itself through its name and flag, inheritance rules, heritage and culture, faith, belief in harmony, language, Arabic, art, literature, architecture, music . . . all of this. Bangladesh has its own life-feeling, life-stream, psychological make-up, and stream of emotion. There is also a particular community frame of mind, with its passions and desires, and there is a common melody of happiness and sadness in the sound of the heart strings, a common jingling of passion and feeling. In the lives and thought-worlds of Bangladeshis there are so many innumerable distinctions that give them uniqueness the world over, even in comparison with other countries and places where Bengali is spoken or where Islam is followed. Regarding Islam we have to say that in this country 85 percent of the people are Muslims.

These distinctive elements are the ingredients of "Bangladeshi nationalism." They are not the bark of the tree but its true sap. And this sap is the true strength, foundation, and ground of Bangladeshi nationalism.

[From Khondakār Ābdul Hāmid, "Bānglādeśhī Jātīyatābād," *Spashtabhāshīr Kalām* (Dhaka: ADL Prakashani, 2006), 2:107–110. Trans. R. F. McDermott.]

CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION OF BANGLADESH

In 1971 few political commentators would have thought that Islam as a political factor had any future in Bangladesh. But Mujib's secularism was imposed from the top, and when expectations of a "golden Bengal" did not materialize, Islamists came to the

forefront, and military regimes found them a convenient tool to use in legitimizing their rule.

For instance, Zia introduced Islamic studies as compulsory in the first through eighth grades, encouraged state patronage of Islamic festivals, uttered the Bismillah, or profession of faith, before speeches, strengthened his country's ties with Saudi Arabia, and founded the Islamic University at Santidanga-Dulalpur in Kustia in 1979. Most far-reaching were his alterations of the Constitution, which took place in 1977; secularism as an ideal was replaced by Islam.

The original constitution was passed by the Constituent Assembly on November 4, 1972, and contained a preamble, 153 articles, 11 parts, and 4 schedules. When it was amended in 1977 by Martial Law Proclamation, several articles were changed or suspended, and in others words were added, dropped, or changed.

The excerpt to follow is from the Preamble; what was added is underlined, and what was dropped is in brackets [].

PREAMBLE

BISMILLAH-AR-RAHMAN-AR-RAHIM! (In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful)

We, the people of Bangladesh, having proclaimed our Independence on the 26th day of March, 1971, and through a historic war [struggle] for national independence [liberation], established the independent, sovereign People's Republic of Bangladesh;

Pledging that the high ideals of absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah, nationalism, democracy, and socialism (meaning economic and social justice), [and secularism,] which inspired our heroic people to dedicate themselves to, and our brave martyrs to sacrifice their lives in the war for national independence [the national liberation struggle], shall be the fundamental principles of the Constitution;

Further pledging that it shall be a fundamental aim of the State to realise through the democratic process a socialist society, free from exploitation—a society in which the rules of law, fundamental human rights and freedom, equality and justice, political, economic, and social, will be secured for all citizens;

Affirming that it is our sacred duty to safeguard, protect, and defend this Constitution and to maintain its supremacy as the embodiment of the will of the people of Bangladesh so that we may prosper in freedom and may make our full contribution toward international peace and cooperation in keeping with the progressive aspirations of mankind;

In our Constituent Assembly, this eighteenth day of Kartik, 1379 B.S., corresponding to the fourth day of November, 1972 A.D., do hereby adopt, enact and give to ourselves this Constitution.

[From A. K. M. Shamsul Huda, *The Constitution of Bangladesh*, 2 vols. (Chittagong: Rita Court, 1997), 1:192–193.]

THE JAMAAT-E ISLAMI AND THE CRITIQUE OF SECULARISM

No discussion of Islamization, or of the post-1971 years in Bangladesh, would be complete without attention to the Jamaat-e Islami, for although there are many Islam-oriented political parties and groups in Bangladesh, the Jamaat is the most powerful and visible.

The Jamaat was founded in August 1941 in Lahore by Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi (see chapter 9). Even though he had initially argued against the idea of Pakistan because he feared that it would not be run on Islamic lines, once it became clear that the birth of Pakistan was inevitable, he worked toward implementing an Islamic government for the new country. It was the Jamaat that was primarily responsible for the declaration in 1956 that Pakistan was an “Islamic state.” However, Maududi and the Jamaat labored for the restoration of democracy after the withdrawal of martial law in 1962—because they perceived democracy to be prerequisite to an Islamic social order—and they championed the removal of disparities between East and West Pakistan.

Indeed, Ghulam Azam (b. 1920), the Jamaat’s most influential Bangladeshi leader, joined the language movement of the early 1950s, although he did not support the breakup of Pakistan. At a press conference in Dacca in May 1970, as the newly elected president of the East Pakistan Jamaat, Azam denounced the Bengali nationalism of Mujib’s six points as a great threat to the integrity and solidarity of Pakistan; the only boundaries that counted, he said, were not territorial ones, but those between believers and nonbelievers. Nationalism was not his only target: he felt secularism, capitalism, and socialism to be dangerous political deadweights. Only democracy, if understood and practiced along Islamic lines, could be healthy for a country. Azam’s philosophy thereby contravened three of Mujib’s four original principles.

The Jamaat is the most prominent representative of politicized Islam in Bangladesh, but many other organizations work in the social and cultural spheres for the dissemination of Islamic ideals and values. One example is the apolitical Tablighi Jamaat. This group, founded in India in the 1920s, works to spread Islam primarily by teaching Muslims to live lives of greater piety and orthodoxy, patterning themselves on the pure vision of the Prophet’s example. Although transnational and anti-Western, the Tablighi Jamaat has no political agenda for any one country. Another example is the Islamic Foundation, founded in 1975 as an autonomous organization that builds and maintains mosques and Islamic centers and academies, publishes books and organizes conferences, conducts research on Islam, and promulgates world fraternity, tolerance, and justice. Other Muslim institutions finance the founding of madrasas, lobby to Islamize banking, and provide aid to development projects through Islam-inspired NGO-like organizations. The success of the “Islam-loving” groups, whether political or not, cannot be ascribed simply to disillusionment with the corruption and ineptitude of

the democratically elected governments since 1991, although this certainly aids the cause of those critical of the status quo. In the post-1971 political arena, Bangladeshis have valued prosperity, law and order, and a functioning civil society based on traditional values, which an influential minority has defined in terms of a High Islam linked with Saudi Arabia and purified of “Hindu,” Indian influence.

There are also Islamic groups that are much more militant and threatening than the Jamaat, which, being a political party, has to maintain a certain control for electoral purposes. For example, there are several outlawed militant Islamic organizations, one of which, the Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB)—claiming to wage jihad against secularists and leftists for the establishment of an Islamic state under Islamic law—was responsible for coordinated explosions throughout Bangladesh in 2005, when hundreds of bombs detonated within an hour of each other in all but one of the country’s administrative districts. The two top leaders, Sheikh Abdur Rahman, an original signatory of al Qaeda’s fatwa against the West, and Siddiq-ul Islam, alias Bānglā Bhāi (“Brother of Bengal”), were arrested in March 2006 and executed in March 2007.

GHULAM AZAM: THE THREAT OF A SECULAR WEST BENGAL

Azam has been a symbol in Bangladesh for conflicting ideas over the place of Islam in the ideal government, the judgment of history concerning the 1971 war, relations with Pakistan, the treatment of pro-Pakistani supporters, and Bangladeshi patriotism. As a pro-Pakistani “collaborator” in the Liberation War, Azam had no choice but to flee to West Pakistan in November 1971, and from there to London, where he stayed until 1978, during which time the Mujib government canceled his citizenship, along with that of thirty-nine others. General Zia permitted him to return, although he did not issue him a passport, and by 1979 the Jamaat had been allowed to function again. In 1991 Azam was elected president of the Jamaat (he stepped down in 2000), and in 1994 the High Court gave him back his citizenship. In 1980, shortly after returning home to Bangladesh, in order to counter accusations that he was not loyal enough, Azam wrote a booklet called “*Āmār Desh Bānglādes̄h*” (My country Bangladesh), in which he wrote glowingly about his birth place and his love for his mother tongue, as shown in his support of the language movement.

The following essay, also included in the volume *Bānglādes̄her Āzādī* (The freedom of Bangladesh), expresses his anti-Indian stance, his fear that a Bangladesh too like West Bengal would be swallowed up by India, and his conviction concerning the importance of Islam to the national character. This essay makes an interesting comparison with the thoughts of Syed Ali Ahsan and Khondakar Abdul Hamid, quoted above.

In the map of the world, Bangladesh is accepted as an independent state, and Bangladesh has the second largest Muslim population of any country in the

world. The position of Bangladesh in terms of its members on the Security Council in the UN is also increasing. The active role of Bangladesh in the Islamic Secretariat, the enthusiasm of Bangladesh in the gathering of representatives for the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and especially the universal popular response in Bangladesh against Russia's interference in Afghanistan, have caused respect for this country to increase among Muslim countries of the world. Although the people of this country were nourished through the grace of India, they do not wish to remain so. Bangladesh is by no means prepared to be controlled by a beckon from India or to live under foreign rule. The Bangladeshi people want to live with a full sense of the dignity of freedom, as citizens of an independent country. Everyone in the world now realizes how the domestic and foreign policies of the Sheikh Mujib government completely rejected the people.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAINTAINING OUR FREEDOM

It is much more difficult to keep one's freedom than to achieve it. This is true in all countries, but at this time in Bangladesh it is especially important. The reasons for this are several:

(1) As a result of the fact that in our country there are so many political organizations that desire to link themselves to foreign countries, foreign powers are becoming intent on gaining positions of power here. If the people involved in these organizations came to know about this, perhaps they would not wish to be made dependent. But they are naturally motivated in their willingness to be influenced by promises of foreign aid and support. However, if one country is successful in placing a particular group in power in another country, for its own benefit, then the host country's government will find it extremely difficult to maintain its freedom. . . .

About those in Bangladesh who claim to value the ideal of Bengali nationalism and who believe that the culture of this Bengal and that Bengal are the same, while valuing their belief I am bound to say this, that Bangladesh's independence and separate existence are by no means safe in their hands. The freedom of Bangladesh demands its own nationalism defined in terms of territorial boundaries. In spite of the fact that our language is the same, the nationalism of West Bengal is quite different from ours. Through Bangladeshi nationalism it is possible to refuse Bengali nationalism. But who does not know that in our country there are active organizations which do not accept Bangladeshi nationalism? Even worse, instead of the language spoken among the majority of Bangladeshis, they much prefer to follow the style of Bengali spoken in West Bengal. . . .

(2) Second, . . . there is a foreign philosophy that is chiefly against Bangladesh's own ideal for itself. It is known as secularism. There are two types of secularists. One group favors keeping religion bounded within their own

personal lives. They do not deny religion. Some of them practice religion to a certain extent. They ceremoniously perform *nāmāz* and *roshā*, etc., but in their social lives they do not wish religion to enter into politics, economics, or other social matters. They want to be driven by their own discrimination and intelligence. Even though they are recognized as Muslims they are not willing to accept as rules for their whole lives the examples of Allah, the Qur'an, or the Prophet.

Another group of those professing secularism believes that religion is contrary to progress, and that religion has no place in one's personal life. Even though they are naturally against religion, they give the open pretense of being secularists.

Both of these types of secularists are able to work side by side in the political arena. . . .

But it is necessary to judge whether Bangladesh's freedom and security are truly possible in their hands. If Bangladesh wishes to live with a separate existence from West Bengal, or India, then the secularism of India must certainly be abandoned. If Bengali Muslims had agreed to the demand for the creation of only one independent state of undivided India on the basis of secular policies during the leadership of Gandhi and Nehru, then today Bangladesh would not exist. In such a circumstance, Bangladesh would have been a region within an undivided Bengal in an undivided India. The majority of Bengali Muslims gave up Congress's secular philosophy on the basis of Muslim nationalism and as a result of being partners in the Pakistan movement created a West Bengal and an East Bengal. If East Bengal had not been split off from India there would be no Bangladesh today. This the secularists are also bound to admit. Today if independent Bangladesh takes up secularism it will become one with West Bengal, and we will have started down the path of losing our freedom. . . .

That is why the doctrine of secularism is very lethal for Bangladesh. Only that Muslim nationalism, . . . the two-nation theory that caused the creation of Pakistan, can take care of Bangladesh. And the new form of Indian secular nationalism is Bengali nationalism. . . .

(3) Third, owing to Bangladesh's territorial condition, arrangements for the defense of the country are beset with problems. If Bangladesh were surrounded by several states, even if there were bitter relations with one, this would be compensated for by close relations with other neighbors. But Bangladesh is surrounded by only one country on three and a half sides, and a small state does not receive good behavior from a big neighbor. No matter how Bangladesh tries to maintain good relations with such a powerful neighbor, one who thinks of itself as our custodian, there is no other means of self-preservation apart from constant vigilance.

In an armed conflict with India it will never be possible for Bangladesh, no matter how strong its armed forces, to win. There is only one means of liberation from the supremacy of India, and that is the arming of all the people and

those in the armed forces with an earnest and vigorous conviction of a nationalism that is different from that of India. . . .

The first word on this country's freedom is national character. And in order to build it up, a few basic ingredients are necessary. These basic ingredients are the creation of man's fundamental faith.

Even this country's non-Muslims are not against religion, are not secular. In their daily lives the influence of religion is obvious. If one wants to build up their character also, it will have to be on the basis of religion. And to build up the character of Muslims, one needs to establish a context in which a firm faith in Allah, the Prophet, the Qur'an, and the last days can flourish. Men have various lapses regarding all of these fundamental beliefs, for various reasons. The main reason is the lack of education about the Qur'an. Even so, ninety-nine out of one hundred Muslims believe in the Qur'an. If we were to attempt to build character by investing in this faith, then we could begin working today. . . .

Those who have political power in Bangladesh should especially consider that if they attempt to initiate in this country any view or path that conflicts with the nation's fundamental Muslim beliefs, they will be wasting the nation's strength in mutual antagonisms, let alone uplifting the country. In such a situation it will be completely impossible for them to safeguard our country's freedom.

[From Ghulam Azam, *Āmār Desh Bānglādes̄h* (Dhaka: Boi Kitab Prakashani, 1980), 22–29. Trans. R. F. McDermott.]

THE DEFENSE OF SECULARISM IN BANGLADESH

The Jamaat and other pro-Islam organizations also have their detractors, people unconvinced that Islam is the ideal bedrock of a Bangladeshi nationalism. Indeed, after Azam was elected president of the Jamaat in 1991, Bangladeshi citizens such as Jahanara Imam, alarmed by the increasing power of those who had worked actively against the liberation struggle of 1971, established a "people's court" (*gana adālat*) to try "collaborators" for their alleged war crimes. Azam and others were convicted in Suhrawardy Park on March 26, 1991, and sentenced to death. Although the court was a symbolic protest, the verdict led to months of controversy, protests, and even killings among supporters and detractors of the Jamaat. By December 1992, however, the movement had lost steam in the wake of the political repercussions of the destruction of the Babri Masjid in India. All political parties tried to use this to their advantage, and in comparison with the deaths of more than a thousand Muslims in India, the fiery debate over the fate of Ghulam Azam receded to the background for another two decades.

Bangladeshi secularists claim a venerable tradition that goes back to the language movement of the early 1950s and the liberation struggle of the 1960s; both were waged on the basis of Bengali culture and regional distinctiveness, not Islam. "Monuments" to the secularist ideal are the Shahid Minar on the

Dhaka University campus; the National Monument to the Martyrs of 1971 in Savar, outside Dhaka; the various literary and cultural events sponsored by the Bangla Academy; the yearly celebration of Pahela Baishakh, the Bengali New Year; the historic contribution of Hindus, Christians, and tribal peoples to the development of the nation; and the love of the people for the songs of Rabindranath Tagore and Nazrul Islam. Secularists also point to the diversity of Muslim identity in Bangladesh; not everyone agrees with the global (Saudi-influenced) ideal of the Jamaat, or with their attempts to purify Bangladeshi Islam of its strong tradition of Sufi saint veneration.

In this section we give two quite different examples of the secularist perspective. The first is by Maulana Bhashani: although as a pious Muslim he approved of those who sided with socialism as a philosophy because it coincided with principles enshrined in Islam, he also believed firmly in the separation of religion and the state, hoped for a nation in which different religions could live side by side, and was vehemently critical of the Jamaat's potential compromise of Bangladesh's autonomy through its continuing loyalty to Pakistan. Azam and Bhashani were, indeed, ideological enemies. The Jamaat criticized Bhashani as a *kafir* [unbeliever], and this caused Bhashani to declare that he was a better Muslim than Maududi because he stood for Islamic socialism.

MAULANA BHASHANI WARNS HIS COUNTRY

On September 22, 1976, two months before his death, Bhashani penned the following warning, "Jāmāte Shibire Ranasajjā" ("War Preparations in the Jamaat's Camp"), for the newspaper *Hakkathā Shibir* ("battle camp") is also the name of the Jamaat's youth wing, which is more militant and violent than its parent organization.

Recently the Jamaat-e Islami has once again begun to work. We have come to know that under their patronage the volunteer Al-Badars are preparing the camps for battle. For this purpose apparently liberal international aid is on its way.

The Jamaat-e Islami, a group of Islamic fascists, has been trying since the British period to prick the politics and political movements of this country with poison. At the time of the Pakistan movement, they armed themselves, even though they were against the creation of Pakistan. Their plots were very important in keeping British imperialism alive. They snubbed the popular united movement [for Pakistan], but the Jamaat-e Islami's own ideas ended without success, for historical reasons. After the establishment of Pakistan they expressed themselves in a new fashion. They attempted to delude the religiously naive people of the country with a capitalist extortionist theory of Islam. Then, though various movements, their anti-people behavior became clear. In the Liberation War of 1971, they wore this behavior nakedly and, having formed the Al-Badar, together with the Pakistan-raider army division murdered the

country's intellectuals and progressive politicians. In the merciless judgment of history, their plots did not in the end prove successful. Then these murderers, whom we know by face, together with Ghulam Azam, fled to Pakistan where they now live. But the Pakistani government is also unsettled by their plots. In 1975 Bhutto's Pakistan government examined their papers and accounts and proved the involvement [in their activities] of foreign capitalists.

The upheaval in the Bhutto government has given quite a bit of help to the daring rise of the Bangladesh Jamaat followers. And in the meantime they and their leaders have been able to decide what their political "line" or platform is.

Gaining strength from this "line," they are gradually beginning to uncover their faces. Certain people are forming political groups under the cloak of the Jamaat and openly introducing the language of armed threat into the Jamaat platform. Prior to this, in 1976 they planned an armed resurgence with the help of the then-air force chief M. G. Toyab. . . . By the grace of Allah that conspiracy proved unsuccessful.

In any event, in recent days the fascists in the Jamaat-e Islami are once again more clearly active. In this regard they are using the cover of religion to shield themselves. During the last Ramadan, in Chattogram, Cox's Bazaar, and several other cities, in the name of protecting the holiness of Ramadan they set about annoying poor, harmless people by raiding small hotels. This was their initial maneuver.

In the meantime they have begun to establish organizations all over the country. They have apparently set to work with a master plan of creating salaried armed cells in four thousand unions all over Bangladesh. We learn through dependable sources that they have received sixty million taka from their international connections for this purpose.

[From Maksud, *Maolānā ʿAbdul Hāmid Khān Bhāshān*, 526–527.

Trans. R. F. McDermott.]

ANISUZZAMAN: A STATEMENT FOR SECULARISM IN BANGLADESH

Perhaps the most prominent spokesperson for secularism in Bangladesh today is Anisuzzaman (b. 1937), professor of Bengali at the University of Dhaka (1959–1969, 1985–2003) and the University of Chittagong (1969–1985). He has authored nearly thirty books, branching out during his long literary career from literature to culture, education, politics, and controversies over national identity, and he has been associated with research projects of the United Nations University.

The following excerpts are taken from a speech, "Secularism and Bangladesh," delivered on June 26, 2005, at a function in Dhaka in honor of Jahanara Imam.

The word *dharmanirapekshatā* [secularism] in the Bengali language is so new that perhaps it still has not been admitted into many Bengali dictionaries.

However, if one searches in an English-Bengali dictionary for the Bengali translation of “secularism,” then one may occasionally find *dharmanirapekshatā* (disinterestedness or impartiality toward religion), or *ihajāgatikatā* or *ihalaauki-katā* (this worldliness). We will speak in a little while about these latter two Bengali translations. But at the very least one may say that *dharmanirapekshatā* is the Bengali equivalent of the English word “secularism.” Even in English the word “secularism” is not very old, but “secular” has been in existence for five or six hundred years. The Latin word that forms its base first appears in Christian writings to indicate something not associated with religion, something associated with this world. Any building that is not constructed with the intention of worship is secular; an education that does not give lessons in religious subjects is secular; a line of thinking that is limited to this-worldly matters, leaving off the other world, is secular. That is why *ihajāgatikatā* is one Bengali rendering of “secularism.”

In the Constitution of Bangladesh, we have rendered secularism into Bengali as *dharmanirapekshatā*. The reason for this is that *dharmanirapekshatā* has been current as a translation for “secularism” for a long time in our country. Its use is no mistake. The etymological meaning of *nirapeksha* is “devoid of interest or partiality”—hence, lacking an affinity for work, devoid of purpose, indifferent. When we speak of a non-aligned state or an individual who does not belong to any party then *nirapeksha* is suggested in that very sense . . . In the same way, where a subject has no association with religion, it is *dharmanirapeksha*; a state without concern for religion is a *dharmanirapeksha* [secular] state. . . .

[Here he reviews the European, humanistic origins of the notion of secularism. . . .]

In 1949, when the Constitution of India was adopted, there was no mention of socialism or secularism among the guiding principles of the state. In the Preamble to the Constitution the country was stated to be a sovereign democratic republic. Only in 1977, in the 42nd Amendment, was the country designated as a sovereign socialist secular democratic republic. But from the beginning Indian leaders spoke of socialism and secularism. Apparently some understood secularism to mean the separation of religion from the state, whereas others assumed that the state would protect each religious group present in the country or would treat them all equally.

Although the Muslim League claimed that the Indian Muslims were a separate nation [*jāti*], and demanded the establishment of an independent state of Pakistan for them, its leaders never hinted that Pakistan would become a religious state. More than once Jinnah said that the form of the projected state would depend on the wishes of the people’s representatives. As for himself, he thought of Pakistan as a modern democratic state. . . . While inaugurating the Pakistan Constituent Assembly, he said several times that religion was an individual’s private affair; it had nothing to do with the state.

[Next he discusses examples of increasing Islamization (Islāmīkarana) in Pakistan: the 1949 Objectives Resolution, the 1956 and 1962 Constitutions, and the Legal Framework Order of 1969.]

Soon began the liberation war of Bangladesh. That the national character of this country would not be religious was indicated by the Proclamation of Independence on April 10, 1971, when Bangladesh was declared as a sovereign people's republic. That Bangladesh would be a secular [*dharmānirapeksha*] country was often underscored by the leaders during the liberation war. . . . When Bangabandhu, released from a Pakistani prison, returned to Bangladesh as the head of state and addressed the crowds at the racecourse, he stated clearly that the fundamental principles of the state policy of Bangladesh, the second biggest Muslim state in the world, would be democracy, socialism, and secularism. Later, in 1972, he added another principle: nationalism. . . .

[He describes the loss of this vision in 1975 and the Islamicizing vision of Ziaur Rahman and General Ershad, particularly the latter's Eighth Amendment.]

Did something happen in Bangladesh society that led us to abandon secularism and adopt a state religion? There is no doubt that on an individual level the tendency toward the adherence of religious rites and customs has increased. The number of religious and partly religious functions, like *Milād* [the birthday of the Prophet], *Urs* [the commemoration of the death anniversary of a holy person], and *Sirātun Nabi* [recitation of the life of the Prophet], has multiplied. . . . The number and influence of *pīrs* is also on the rise. . . . The number of madrasas is proliferating, together with the mosques and their adjoining *maktabs* [primary schools]. The majority of these have turned into centers for religiously based political parties, especially the Jamaat. . . . The influence of resurgent Islam in West Asia in the 1970s was felt in Bangladesh, and one noticed the presence of diplomats from North Africa and West Asia in various types of religio-political functions in Bangladesh.

Just as in 1971, so also after: communal power was engaged, and slowly slowly communalism returned. Nevertheless, no demand ever arose from the general public for the establishment of a religious state or for the eradication of secularism. Those holding state power did it for their own objectives and by their own efforts. Ziaur Rahman made his constitutional changes under martial law; that is why there was little opportunity for challenge. But there was such a public outcry against Ershad's introduction of the state religion that cases challenging the provision were filed in the Supreme Court. . . .

However, it must be said that even after the introduction of the state religion, there was no change in Bangladesh's laws, and one noticed no effort to bring back Islamic custom or heritage. But discrimination was encouraged by it, and we saw the results of this during the communal persecutions of 1990, 1992 and of 2001 when the limits were surpassed. As a result, such uncertainty and instability arose in the minds of the oppressed that they left their homes to seek shelter elsewhere in the country; some were compelled to leave the country altogether. The communalism of the majority always gives birth to that of the minority.

That is why many among the religious minorities are thinking today about how to protect their community interests—they worry about the preservation of their seats in the Parliament, so much so that they tend to opt for separate electorates to safeguard their representations. Those who practice politics with religion have encouraged the minority to consider these things—so that the separate electorate once demanded by the Muslim League and the communalization of politics may again return to national life. Now the victims of communal oppression are also the Ahmadiyyas: as in Pakistan, so also in Bangladesh, it is claimed that they are non-Muslims, and Ahmadiyya mosques, centers, and houses are frequently attacked. During these attacks, the passivity of the law-enforcing agencies, and sometimes their aid of the rioters, has bewildered the citizenry. The Shias are also claimed to be non-Muslims, but at least they are not noticeably attacked, though when the Ahmadiyyas' turn is over, it will be their time.

Members of civil society, even with limited power, have stood against this communal oppression. But the secular political powers have not been successful in mounting a united opposition. Rather, secular political parties have been most interested in holding onto their own group's, or leaders', or workers' religious images. Herein is our great difficulty. . . . Even when we have had favorable circumstances, we have not been able to hold onto the ideal of secularism. . . . Those of us who believe that without secularism there is no democracy and that without democracy the forward movement of Bangladesh is impossible, our duty is to fight against communalism with all our might and to try to return secularism to our national life.

At a time of incurable disease, Jahanara Imam took this national responsibility on her shoulders, attempting to reestablish the consciousness of the liberation war and to express political and social perturbation against those who had opposed it. Inherent in that was the task of returning us to secularism. That work still remains. The people of Bangladesh must understand that religion is a personal matter—if one pulls it into politics there will be no gain except to harm both religion and the state, both the individual and the collective. This ideal is inseparably linked with the welfare of Bangladesh.

[From Anisuzzaman, "Dharmanirupeshatā o Bāṅglādeśh,"
1, 3, 4, 7, 10, 11–12. Trans. Anisuzzaman and R. F. McDermott.]

THE RETURN TO DEMOCRACY, AND CONTINUING CHALLENGES FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

After the ouster of General Ershad, two landmark amendment acts were passed regarding the Constitution. The first, the Twelfth Amendment Act of August 1991, amended fourteen articles so as to reintroduce the parliamentary form of government to Bangladesh and ensure the participation of people's representatives in local government bodies. The second, the Thirteenth Amendment Act

of March 1996, made provision for a nonparty caretaker government to aid a nonpartisan Election Commission in its support of free and peaceful parliamentary elections after the term in office of one government had come to an end. In practice, however, the caretaker government is not always trusted to be credible or unprejudiced, as was evident in the lead-up to the 2007 elections.

Since 1991 there have been alternating series of democratic governments in Bangladesh, the two most prominent so far being led by female political heirs of slain former politicians: the Bangladesh National Party, headed by Khaleda Zia, General Zia's widow, and the Awami League, led by Sheikh Hasina Wajed, Sheikh Mujib's daughter. The ideological basis of the Awami League once tended to favor socialism, secularism, and Bengali nationalism, and was frequently construed as pro-Indian, while the Bangladesh National Party had been founded to promote private enterprise, the Islamic lobby, and Bangladeshi nationalism, sometimes resulting in friendly overtures to Pakistan. Khaleda Zia formally received Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf to Dhaka in July 2002, the first visit of a Pakistani leader to Bangladesh since the split in 1971. Because of her party's reliance upon the electoral strength of the Jamaat, her government introduced or continued several Islamizing practices, one prominent example being the compulsory study of religion in Arabic in primary schools.

However, despite the theoretical contrasts between the two parties, the Awami League made election pacts with radical Islamists in 2006, and in the 2001 election the Indian government worked hard to engage with the Bangladesh National Party. Moreover, their "democratic" claims notwithstanding, both parties have failed to control the law-and-order problems in the country, deliver on promises to the poor, or stem the tide of political communalism. Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government returned to power for the second term in 2008 (her first term was 1996–2001), with promises to restore the 1972 constitution, bring to trial war criminals from 1971, and boost economic development.

Indeed, the economic and social problems besetting Bangladesh are legion. Forty-five percent of Bangladeshis are below the poverty line, and, excluding city-states like Hong Kong and Singapore, Bangladesh is the most densely populated country in the world, with nearly 150 million people living within 55,126 square miles. The usual challenges besetting poor countries with inadequate social services all must be confronted here—low literacy rates, especially for women; the inability to respond to environmental disasters, such as yearly flooding and consequent agricultural shortages; and difficulty of access to quality health care. Since 1993 much Bangladeshi well water has been found to be contaminated with natural arsenic, and so the nearly ten million tube wells drilled in the 1970s by UNICEF-sponsored teams in an effort to eradicate cholera and other water-borne diseases have, ironically, created other health tragedies. Refugees—into Bangladesh from Myanmar and India's northeastern states, and out of Bangladesh into India during periods of political instability—remain a severe economic and political issue, aggravating cordial Indo-Bangladesh rela-

tions. "Minority" problems internal to the country are particularly troubling. Although estimates vary, and are a source of heated debate, it seems clear that the Hindu community is slowly declining in terms of absolute percentages; and reports of harassment and worse, especially at the hands of pro-Islamic elements, are rife.

THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS AND THE DEFIANCE OF "NATIONAL INTEGRITY"

The people of the 2 percent of the country officially listed as "tribal" have had a particularly frustrating history within Bangladesh. Their homeland is the Hill Tracts near Chittagong, an important port ceded to Pakistan in 1947; thus they are citizens in a country whose *raison d'être* they cannot share, since the majority of them are Hindu, Buddhist, or "animist," not Muslim. In fact, the eleven multilingual ethnic tribes of the Hill region agitated to be incorporated into a "native state" in 1947. Resentful after Independence of increasing migration into their territories, which comprise 10 percent of the land of Bangladesh, the utilization of their hydroelectric power and timber, and their own marginalization in Dhaka's political circles, a delegation headed by Manobendra Narayan Larma called on Mujib after his accession to power in 1971 to demand autonomy for the Chittagong Hill Tracts, with its own legislature; the retention of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Manual from 1900, which accorded local chiefs power over customary matters; and a ban on new Bengali settlers. Mujib rejected their demands, advising the Hill people to assimilate to the new nationalist Bengali identity. In response, in 1972 Larma formed the Jana Samhati Samiti (United People's Party), which began waging an armed struggle for political autonomy.

Claiming to promote an inclusive national identity, Zia reached out to non-Bengali minorities, such as the Santals, Garos, Manipuris, and Chakmas, and appointed a Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Commission in 1976, and a tribal convention in 1977 to promote a dialogue between the government and tribal groups. However, he was not open to discussion of autonomy and cultural self-preservation, and the tribal groups were alienated by his promotion of a politicized Islam. By 1992, in addition to its earlier demands the United People's Party was pressing for the complete relocation, out of the Hill Tracts, of settlers who had moved since 1947; for the withdrawal of the military; and for the designation of three districts as one unit to be called Jumaland. Eventually, in December 1997, Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government brokered a peace accord with the United People's Party. It provided for the creation of three Regional Hill District Councils, which were to have broad powers over land and land management, taxes, law and social justice, youth welfare, environmental protection and development, local tourism, business licensing, census taking, and cultivation. The government also agreed to allow the return and rehabilitation of tribal refugees who had fled to the Indian state of Tripura; to provide funds for the advancement

and preservation of uniquely tribal culture; and to give amnesty to armed members of tribal organizations against whom criminal cases had been lodged. In 1998, when the accord still had not been implemented, the Rangamati Declaration was issued by a number of Chittagong-based tribal, political, and human rights groups, urging the government to act on its promises. In 2013, the accord still had not been fully implemented.

Their grievances are expressed by the following document.

JANA SAMHATI SAMITI: THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS GUIDELINES

Ideology: Humanitarianism is the ideology of the Jana Samhati Samiti.

Principles: Nationalism, Democracy, Secularism, are the main principles of the Jana Samhati Samiti.

Aims and Objectives: . . . The achievement of the right of self-determination of the various small nationalities, such as the Chakma, Marma (Mogh), Tripura, Bom, Mrung, Pankho, Khumi, Chak, Kheyangang, and Lusai, is the main aim and object of the party, that is:

1. In order to be free from Islamic fanaticism, expansionism, exploitation, oppression, deprivation and perpetual rule of Bangladesh and to safeguard the national entity and homeland for the various multilingual nationalities—(a) to ensure the separate entity status of CHT with a constitutional guarantee, (b) to establish regional autonomy with a legislative assembly;

2. CHT is the homeland of various multilingual small nationalities. Therefore—(a) to do away with difference, oppression, exploitation, and deprivation among the various multilingual small nationalities; (b) to develop culture and language of the various small nationalities. . . .

Strategy and Tactics on External Help: Jana Samhati Samiti, irrespective of caste, creed, and religion, would welcome and be ready to accept unconditionally every help extended from any nation, humanitarian society, UNO, humanitarian and political organizations, which are sympathetic to our cause and believe that would accelerate the movement for the right of self-determination. Especially PCJSS expects help and cooperation from world humanitarian and democratic states in preserving the national entity and homeland of the Jumma people. It also expects every kind of help from the UNO along with other world humanitarian organizations, namely—Amnesty International, IFOR, Survival International, and Anti-Slavery, etc.

[From Amena Mohsin, *The Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh: On the Difficult Road to Peace* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2003), appendix 2, 127–128.]

LITERARY CRITIQUES OF BANGLADESHI SOCIETY

In Bangladesh, feminist critiques go back at least to Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain (see chapter 4). Nowadays her legacy is both reaffirmed and questioned. Indeed, while December 9 is celebrated as Rokeya Day, the honor-driven phenomenon of purdah, which she fought to eliminate, is seeing a revival among some orthodox Muslims.

More recently, since the 1980s, two literary names have become synonymous with tension in Bangladesh over the position of women in society, freedom of speech, communalism, and the secular-socialist vs. Islamist ideal form of civil society. The Jamaat and associated organizations have attacked various Bangladeshi litterateurs since independence—Humayun Kabir, Daud Haider, Rafiq Azad, Syed Atiqullah, Simon Zakaria, and even Shamsur Rahman—but perhaps none are as well known as Taslima Nasrin and Humayun Azad.

TASLIMA NASRIN AND THE INJUSTICES OF ABUSE

Nasrin (b. 1962), a physician-turned-writer, radical feminist, and human rights advocate, has drawn criticism from Islamists for her writings which showcase the hypocrisy of the powerful and their abuses of women and minorities. In 1995, during the first government of Khaleda Zia, Nasrin was forced to flee from Bangladesh to India and Europe because of protests, book-bannings, and death threats over her novel *Lajjā* (*Shame*) (1993), which described the persecution of Bangladeshi Hindus in retaliation for the destruction in India of the Babri Masjid. Others of her books—*Āmār Meyebelā* (*My Girlhood*) (1999), *Utal Hāoyā* (*Wild Wind*) (2002), *Ka* (*Speak*) (2003), and *Sei Sab Andhakār* (*Those dark days*) (2004)—have also been banned.

Like her novels and memoirs, the following poems are about social and political injustice. In her attempt to publicize and combat the mistreatment of women, she joins the struggles of many women's social, legal, and political organizations, most prominent among which is the Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (The Association of Bangladesh Women).

SHAME, 7 DECEMBER 1992

The plan was that Satipada Das would come to my house that morning
and have tea and snacks. He would play chess and gossip
to his heart's content.

Satipada comes every day, but not today, the news came that
a gang of men with *tupis* [caps] on their heads stormed into

Satipada's house,
poured gasoline over everything in the rooms, the tables and chairs,
the beds, wardrobes, pots and pans,

clothing, books.

Then they quickly lit a whole lot of matchsticks and tossed them
in all the gasoline-soaked places.

As the fires flared up, Satipada stood stunned in the courtyard and watched
the black smoke spreading over their Tatibazar, over
Tatibazar's patch of indifferent sky.

In the evening I went to Satipada's house and saw
Satipada sitting alone upon the ash and charred wood
of his forefathers' ancestral home, blood running down
his body, dark bruises on his chest and back.

Out of shame I could not touch him.

[From *The Game in Reverse: Poems by Taslima Nasrin*, trans.
Carolyne Wright, with Farida Sarkar, Mohammad Nurul Huda,
and Subharanjan Dasgupta (New York: Braziller, 1995), 51.]

Nurjahan, the subject of the next poem, was a woman stoned to death for alleged adultery, in accordance with the decree of a local mullah issued independently of state institutions, in January 1993.

NOORJAHAN

They have made Noorjahan stand in a hole in the courtyard,
there she stands, submerged to her waist with head hanging.
They're throwing stones at Noorjahan,
those stones are striking my body.

Stones are striking my head, forehead, chest, and back,
they're throwing stones and laughing aloud, laughing and shouting abuse.
Noorjahan's fractured forehead pours out blood, mine also.
Noorjahan's eyes have burst, mine also.
Noorjahan's nose has been smashed, mine also.
Through Noorjahan's torn breast, her heart has been pierced, mine also.
Are those stones not striking you?

They're laughing aloud, laughing and stroking their beards,
there are *tupis* stuck to their heads, they too are shaking with laughter.
They're laughing and swinging their walking sticks;
from the quiver of their cruel eyes, arrows speed to pierce her body,
my body also.
Are those arrows not piercing your body?

[From *The Game in Reverse*, 54.]

HUMAYUN AZAD: A PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS

Humayun Azad (1947–2004) is one of the most recent victims of intolerance in Bangladesh. A prolific writer and scholar, with over seventy titles to his name, he was a trenchant critic of what he perceived to be the degeneration of Bangladesh civil society under the extremist influence of communally minded Islamists and their dictatorpatrons. He also decried male chauvinism in Bengali society, even in revered writers such as Tagore; his book *Nāri* (*Women*) was banned in 1995. The ban was lifted in 2000 as a result of a legal battle Azad won in the high court. In August 2004, following the publication of his novel *Pāk Sār Jamin Sād Bād*, a story about religious groups who collaborated with the Pakistani army during the 1971 war, he was brutally attacked by people affiliated with the Jamaat on the campus of University of Dhaka. He died in Germany five months later.

The following excerpts derive from an earlier essay written in 1981, ten years after Independence and the year in which Zia was assassinated and the country thrown into disorder. The text illustrates the tone of despairing sarcasm common to much of Azad's writing: despair at the punctured hopes ushered in by the freedom of 1971, and sarcasm at the hypocrisy and self-serving nature of the country's leaders. Note that he calls attention to the "foreign," Arabic derivation of *shahīd*, the Bengali word for "witness," or "martyr."

A PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS TO ALL UNKNOWN
PEOPLE WHO DIED IN THE LIBERATION WAR

I have not seen you, I have not seen your corpses; in ten years, heaps of your strong, capable, freed bones have found peace at the bottom of some cold river of Bengal, or beneath the concrete of a city, or in the shelter of the silted earth of some green hamlet, intertwined with the creepers of the forest. You used to have names that sounded in the voices of youths in the neighboring houses, in the voices of your mothers and sisters; but now, ten years later, only your slain bones are here. You have no names; the reputations you used to have were honored more than the fame of any emperor. Now, ten years on, you are only screams decomposed by time; you have no reputation. I beg your forgiveness; I want forgiveness. Perhaps in one of the thousands of villages with sweet names like Radikhal, Kanaksar, Kadamtali, and Baghra you grasped the plough with strong hands, dreamed of rice like golden clusters; before you and behind you stretched the silted earth—and when the call came, you listened. Perhaps you made your living in a casting machine factory or a jute factory, and when the time came you heard the call and stood in line. Perhaps at the time the summons came you were going to school, a great school, a university. Perhaps you were lying, tired, beside the road in a city with your handbarrow, or near your colored rickshaw; when the high alarm sounded you saw, amazed, a rifle in your hand. Or you were out of work because the country had not given you any

employment, you were having a nightmare about being engaged in a conflict with a victorious enemy, or you were just idle; and then at that moment you saw your country standing before you, whom you had a responsibility to save. . . .

All of Bengal is your grave. Wherever a flower blooms anywhere, that is for you; whenever a flower trembles by the touch of the breeze it does so on top of your grave. I have not spoken of your martyrdom. I had said that you are dead, because you desired the truth. I also want that, and I know that this foreign word cannot confer on you any greatness. When countless killers—steel and gunpowder—entered the clothes covering your chest, when your blood spilled out from your veins, you did not wish for any title, you did not seek any throne; you only wished to hold on with your fingertips to the earth and grass of Bengal. No helper came to operate on you, no helicopter or stretcher arrived. You fell without fanfare in a nameless place. Everyone has forgotten you. I seek your forgiveness.

I want to ask you a few things. Why did you seek liberation? Why did you go to battle? Why did you accept a stain on that hand, that hand that held the plough, the rickshaw handle, the pen, the book, the wheelbarrow wheel, or the hand of your wife or beloved? Why were weapons necessary? Did you have a bad dream? Was there a vision, a hint? Was independence necessary for you because you did not have it? Did you want your own country, with a particular society you did not have under the barbaric Pakistanis? When you started singing, “Jay Bānglā,” or “Sonār Bānglā,” or “I love you,” was that only a thing of the moment, or did it issue from your heart, as a plant comes from its own seed? Did you only give a new name to 56,000 square miles of land, or did you wish to change it completely? . . . You did not see independence; well before December 16 you were a dream. You never knew that Bangladesh would be liberated. . . .

Death is the end of all things; that is why you have no more vision, why you no longer get to see the state of Bengal. But if you could see it, would you be cheerful, thinking that you had wasted your blood to no purpose? Now there is animosity against you on all sides, just as there was in 1971; but in 1971 you were victorious. Your defeat began soon after. You are now vanquished in all parts of Bengal; your dreams are laughing matters. The slogans you shouted to put strength in your muscles are almost forbidden; there are conspiracies against the songs you loved more than your own selves. I know that you were not from any particular group; you belonged to Bengal. But now it is not completely safe to live in Bengal. Creatures of the dark rise up in all directions; they are the ones who searched for you with daggers in their hands in 1971. Afterward they had to flee into the netherworld, but now again the time is good for them. Your aim was the future, even though you yourselves were gone, but we who still live, our aim is the past. We are backward-facing; we run eagerly toward the past. . . .

If I inform you that the country of your dreams is now the country in the world that has most gone astray, is most addicted to bad policies, is most lacking in ethics, and is most poor, destroyed, corrupt, and unhealthy, would you be sad? Angry? . . . Bangladesh has seen more than one worthless dictator in the

last ten years, and she has given them a blood-smeared lease. But this lease has resulted in no flourishing. Still today Bangladesh is slipping like a ball down a sloping field, and who knows in what hell it will stop? We have seen that some people wish to wear Bangladesh like an anklet, some wish to turn her into their personal treasury, some strong men have wanted to build her up, making her a star in their uniform or wearing her like a boot on their right or left foot. We who are living helplessly pray for your forgiveness. . . .

Capital piles up in the hands of one group, “democratic socialism” has now become hackneyed speech, colloquial words in Bengali are ridiculed, everywhere English expressions are respected, and Arabic enters Bengali. Now, apart from illiterate farmers, no one speaks Bengali any more; even the downtrodden are learning foreign languages in various tutorials. But when any blockhead youth takes up an old song, it is only your words that come from his lips. I pray for your forgiveness, and I meditate on you in this evil time.

[From Humayun Azad, “Nāmparicayhīn Ye-kono Ekjan Nihata Muktiyoddhār Kāche Kshamāprārthanā,” in his *Nirbācita Prabandha* (Dhaka: Agami Prakashani, 1999), 148–153. Trans. R. F. McDermott.]

MUHAMMAD YUNUS: MICRO-CREDIT AND THE BANGLADESHI MIRACLE

We conclude this chapter with the words of perhaps the most prominent Bangladeshi activist for the poor, Muhammad Yunus (b. 1940), who was honored with the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 for his initiative in founding the Grameen Bank. He then toyed briefly with the idea of founding his own reformist political party in Bangladesh, but instead joined Nelson Mandela, Jimmy Carter, and others on a committee of global “elder statesmen” pledged to speak freely about major world issues. The micro-credit Grameen Bank was established in 1983 after Yunus had spent nine years of informal attempts to help bring dignity and freedom to the lives of poor women borrowers; in 2006 it was catering to seven million borrower-owners, 97 percent of whom were women, in 73,000 villages in Bangladesh. The model has become so successful in raising borrowers and their children above the poverty line that Grameen Bank policies and techniques have been imported to many countries around the world. Yunus’s work rests on the propositions that poverty is a threat to peace and a denial of human rights, that the excesses of free-market capitalism need to be corrected by a social consciousness, which he calls “social business,” and that poverty can, as he puts it, be “put in the museum.”

In the excerpt below, Yunus explains how he began his work.

In the year 1974 Bangladesh fell into the grip of famine.

The university where I taught and served as head of the Economics Department was located in the southeastern extremity of the country, and at first we did not pay much attention to the newspaper stories of death and starvation in

the remote villages of the north. But then skeleton-like people began showing up in the railway stations and bus stations of the capital, Dhaka. Soon this trickle became a flood. Hungry people were everywhere. Often they sat so still that one could not be sure whether they were alive or dead. They all looked alike: men, women, children. Old people looked like children, and children looked like old people.

The government opened gruel kitchens. But every new gruel kitchen ran out of rice. Newspaper reporters tried to warn the nation of the extent of the famine. Research institutions collected statistics on the sources and causes of the sudden migration to the cities. Religious organizations mobilized groups to pick up the dead bodies from the streets and bury them with the proper rites. But soon the simple act of collecting the dead became a larger task than these groups were equipped to handle.

The starving people did not chant any slogans. They did not demand anything from us well-fed city folk. They simply lay down very quietly on our doorsteps and waited to die.

There are many ways for people to die, but somehow dying of starvation is the most unacceptable of all. It happens in slow motion. Second by second, the distance between life and death becomes smaller and smaller, until the two are in such close proximity that one can hardly tell the difference. Like sleep, death by starvation happens so quietly, so inexorably, one does not even sense it happening. And all for a lack of a handful of rice at each meal. In this world of plenty, a tiny baby, who does not yet understand the mystery of the world, is allowed to cry and cry and finally fall asleep without the milk she needs to survive. The next day she may not have the strength to continue living.

I used to feel a thrill at teaching my students the elegant economic theories that could supposedly cure societal problems of all types. But in 1974, I started to dread my own lectures. What good were all my complex theories when people were dying of starvation on the sidewalks and porches across from my lecture hall? My lessons were like the American movies when the good guys always win. But when I emerged from the comfort of the classroom, I was faced with the reality of the city streets. Here good guys were mercilessly beaten and trampled. Daily life was getting worse, and the poor were growing even poorer. . . .

I was lucky that the village of Jobra happened to be close to the campus. In 1958 Field Marshall Ayub Khan, then president of Pakistan, had taken power in a military coup. Because of his fear of rebellious students, he decreed that all new universities be situated away from urban centers. His fear of political agitation meant that the new Chittagong University, where I was teaching, was built in a hilly section of the rural Chittagong District, near to Jobra village. . . .

My repeated trips to the villages around Chittagong University campus led me to discoveries that were essential to establishing the Grameen Bank. The poor taught me an entirely new economics. I learned about the problems that they face

from their own perspective. I tried a great number of things. Some worked. Others did not. One that worked well was to offer people tiny loans for self-empowerment. These loans provided a starting point for cottage industries and other income-generating activities that used the skills the borrowers already had.

I never imagined that my micro-lending program would be the basis for a nation-wide “bank for the poor” serving 2.5 million people or that it would be adapted in more than one hundred countries spanning five continents. I was only trying to relieve my guilt and satisfy my desire to be useful to a few starving human beings. But it did not stop with a few people. Those who borrowed and survived would not let it. And after a while, neither would I. . . .

It took six months of writing back and forth to get the loan formalized. Finally, in December 1976, I succeeded in taking out a loan from the Janata Bank and giving it to the poor of Jobra. All through 1977, I had to sign each and every loan request. Even when I was on a trip in Europe or the United States, the bank would cable or write to me for a signature rather than deal with any of the real borrowers in the village. I was the guarantor and as far as the bank officials were concerned I was the only one that counted. They did not want to deal with the poor who used their capital. And I made sure that the real borrowers, the ones I call the “banking untouchables,” never had to suffer the indignity and demeaning harassment of actually going to a bank. . . .

My work became a struggle to show that the financial untouchables are actually touchable, even huggable. To my great surprise, the repayment of loans by people who borrow without collateral has proven to be much better than those whose borrowings are secured by assets. Indeed, more than 98 percent of our loans are repaid. The poor know that this credit is their only opportunity to break out of poverty. They do not have any cushion whatsoever to fall back on. If they fall afoul of this one loan, they will have lost their one and only chance to get out of the rut. . . .

Some critics argue that our rural clients are too submissive and that we can intimidate them into joining Grameen. Perhaps this is why we make our initiation process so challenging. The pressure provided by the group and the exam help ensure that only those who are truly needy and serious about joining Grameen will actually become members. Those who are better off usually do not find it worthwhile. And even if they do, they will fail our means test and be forced to leave the group anyway. We want only courageous, ambitious pioneers in our micro-credit program. Those are the ones who will succeed.

Once all members pass the exam, the day finally comes when one of them asks for a first loan, usually about twenty-five dollars, in the [nineteen-] eighties. How does she feel? Terrified. She cannot sleep at night. She struggles with the fear of failure, the fear of the unknown. The morning she is to receive her loan, she almost quits. Twenty-five dollars is simply too much responsibility for her. How will she ever be able to repay it? No woman in her extended family has ever had so much money. Her friends come around to reassure her, saying, “Look,

we all have to go through it. We will support you. We are here for just that. Don't be scared. We will all be with you."

When she finally receives the twenty-five dollars, she is trembling. The money burns her fingers. Tears roll down her face. She has never seen so much money in her life. She never imagined it in her hands. She carries the bills as she would a delicate bird or a rabbit, until someone advises her to put the money away in a safe place lest it be stolen.

This is the beginning for almost every Grameen borrower. All her life she has been told that she is no good, that she brings only misery to her family, that they cannot afford to pay her dowry. Many times she hears her mother or her father tell her she should have been killed at birth, aborted or starved. To her family she has been nothing but another mouth to feed, another dowry to pay. But today, for the first time in her life, an institution has trusted her with a great sum of money. She promises that she will never let down the institution or herself. She will struggle to make sure that every penny is paid back.

[From Muhammad Yunus, *Banker to the Poor: Micro-Lending and the Battle Against World Poverty* (New York: Public Affairs, 1999), i–iii, 57–58, 64–65, and 67–68.]

NOTES

1. THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY: FERMENT AND CHANGE

1. K. K. Datta, "Social Conditions in India in the Eighteenth Century," in *History and Culture of the Indian People*, ed. R. C. Majumdar and V. G. Dighe (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1977), 8:749–755.
2. Tapan Raychaudhuri, "The Mid-Eighteenth-Century Background," in *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern India*, vol. 2: *Ca. 1757–ca. 1970*, ed. Dharma Kumar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 8.
3. Jats, a rural group in the Punjab, were Muslim, Hindu, and Sikh, but here he refers to the Hindu Jats.
4. John Stratton Hawley and Mark Juergensmeyer, *Songs of the Saints of India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 78.
5. Rachel Fell McDermott, *Mother of My Heart, Daughter of My Dreams: Kālī and Umā in the Devotional Poetry of Bengal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 31.
6. Allison Busch, "Hidden in Plain View: Brajbhasha Poets at the Mughal Court," *Modern Asian Studies* 44.2 (2010): 267–309.
7. Islamic law, or the Sharia, is based on the Quran and the Sunna, or usual practice, best exemplified by the life of the Prophet. The four schools of legal interpretation—Hanafi, Maliki, Shafii, and Hanbali—present different opinions on the practice of rituals, the degree to which certain laws should be considered obligations, and the methodology for interpreting the Sharia. All were founded by eminent Muslim scholars in the first four centuries of Islam, and all are considered equally valid by Sunni Muslims.

2. THE EARLY TO MID NINETEENTH CENTURY: DEBATES OVER REFORM AND CHALLENGE TO EMPIRE

1. Rammohun Roy, *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy*, ed. Jogendra Chunder Ghose (New Delhi: Cosmo, 1982), 4:928–929.
2. Crossing the ocean, and hence leaving the holy land of India, was considered sufficient reason for loss of caste in Hindu Brahmanical society.
3. Kulin: an elite group found among certain Bengal Brahman and Kayastha sub-castes, whose men were much sought after as husbands. Rammohan himself was a Kulin Brahman.
4. Brian Hatcher, *Idioms of Improvement: Vidyasagar and Cultural Encounter in Bengal* (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1996), 105.
5. William W. Hunter, *The Indian Musalmans: Are They Bound in Conscience to Rebel Against the Queen?* (London: Trubner, 1871), 9.

3. THE LATER NINETEENTH CENTURY: LEADERS OF REFORM AND REVIVAL

1. The temple of Kālī, the Great Goddess, in Calcutta.
2. Sacred stone used in Vaishnava domestic worship.
3. Doorkeepers.
4. An annual festival to Lord Shiva that occurs on the fourteenth day of the new moon in the month of Phalgun (February/March).
5. The Himalayan peak on which Shiva is thought to dwell in meditation.
6. There is a readily available, though not always accurate, English translation of these autobiographical articles in Dayanand Saraswati, *Autobiography of Dayanand Saraswati*, ed. K. C. Yadav (Delhi: Manohar, 1978).
7. Five sacred trees planted together to form a grove for contemplation.
8. Restraint and enjoyment.
9. High caste in Bengal, traditionally associated with clerical work.
10. Syed Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam: A History of the Evolution and Ideals of Islam with a Life of the Prophet* (1923; Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1990), vii.
11. Nautches are public performances by dancing girls, often in the context of religious festivals.
12. The term is properly “Kunbi,” and refers to Maharashtra’s broad community of farming people, ordinary cultivators of low caste.
13. The Civil Marriage Act (III of 1872) legalized marriages performed according to the Brahmo rites, and allowed marriages between persons who did not profess any specific religion or between those of different religions.
14. The term “widow” here refers to a girl whose husband died before the marriage was consummated.
15. All married women wear the red *kunku* mark on their foreheads in Maharashtra.

4. LIBERAL SOCIAL AND POLITICAL THOUGHT IN THE LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY: THE MODERATES

1. The terms “Moderate” and “Extremist” were chosen by the actors in the political drama of the period.
2. Other examples include famous women physicians, such as Kadambini Ganguly (1861–1923), Anandibai Joshi (1865–1887), Rukhmabai (1864–1955), and Haimabati Sen (1866–1933).
3. R. P. Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India* (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1939), 25.
4. Armed thieves, highway murderers, and robber bands.
5. Dadabhai refers to the export from India of the savings and pensions of British officials, and to other costs of British rule such as supplies and military expenditures.
6. William Wedderburn, *Allan Octavian Hume, C.B., “Father of the Indian National Congress,” 1829 to 1912* (London: Unwin, 1913), 51–52.
7. Surendranath Banerjea, *A Nation in Making: Being the Reminiscences of Fifty Years in Public Life* (1925; Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1963), 30–31.
8. Panipat, the site of numerous pitched battles in Indian history. It lies about fifty miles north of Delhi.
9. An Urdu term for which the English word “religion” is only an approximate translation.
10. One crore equals ten million rupees.
11. J. N. Gupta, *Life and Work of Romesh Chunder Dutt* (London: J. M. Dent, 1911), 13.
12. *Ibid.*, 123–124.
13. Provincial governors, chief ministers, and judges.
14. “Sheriff” is an apolitical titular position of authority bestowed for one year on a prominent citizen of Bombay (and now Mumbai).
15. Cornelia Sorabji, *India Calling: The Memories of Cornelia Sorabji, Indian’s First Woman Barrister*, ed. Chandani Lokugé (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 215–216.

5. RADICAL POLITICS AND CULTURAL CRITICISM, 1880–1914: THE EXTREMISTS

1. See the analysis in Ranajit Guha, *Dominance Without Hegemony* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 108–122.
2. A small, round, flat stone, usually kept on the home altar, said to be sacred to and an embodiment of Vishnu or, especially in Bengal, Krishna.
3. Gopal Ganesh Agarkar (1856–1895) was, like Tilak and Gokhale, a Maharashtrian reformer but differed with the former over the role of social vs. political reform; Agarkar considered himself a political Moderate.
4. Kings of ancient India had their grants to subordinates engraved on copper or bronze rectangular plates.
5. Sir John Robert Seeley, author of *The Expansion of England* (London, 1895).

6. Once the private home of Warren Hastings, Belvedere later became the official residence of the lieutenant-governor of Bengal, until the imperial capital was moved to Delhi in 1911.
7. Mofussil towns are those in the provincial or rural districts of India.
8. Charles Stewart Parnell, an Irish nationalist politician of the late nineteenth century, was founder and leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party.
9. *Rajas*, or passion, is one of the three qualities of Sāṅkhya philosophy. The other two, mentioned also, are *sattva* (purity) and *tamas* (inertia).
10. The Maratha liberator Shivaji apparently considered Ramdas Swami, the Hindu devotee of Rāma and Hanumān and a prominent contemporary Marathi saint-poet, to be his spiritual guru. The two are said to have first met in 1674.
11. Divine play or sport of God.
12. Bauls are Bengali singers who are known for their characteristic clothes and musical instruments, and who also tend toward a syncretistic type of religious sensibility. Rabindranath Tagore was very influenced by the Baul singing tradition and by what he understood to be the Bauls' solitary mystical orientation.
13. The shehnai is a double-reed oboe made out of wood, with a flared metal bell at the end. Its sound is said to be auspicious, and the instrument is commonly used in weddings in North India.
14. Giuseppe Mazzini (1805–1872) and Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807–1882) were both Italian national heroes.
15. This refers to the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909, which included separate electorates for Muslims, enlarged the viceroy's Legislative Council, and increased the electorate overall.
16. "Perfidious Albion" is a hostile epithet for Great Britain.
17. Edward J. Thompson, *Rabindranath Tagore: His Life and Work* (London: Oxford University Press, 1921), 44.
18. Translatable as "universal learning," "all-India," or "the world and India."
19. N. Cattopadhyaya, "Mahatma Gandhi at Rabindranath's Santiniketan," *Visva-Bharata Quarterly* (special issue, 1949): 336.
20. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (New York: John Day, 1946), 342–343.
21. Radice writes in his glossary that the first part of Ishvarchandra Vidyasagar's famous Bengali primer includes two boys, Gopal and Rakhal, associated with good and bad behavior, respectively. See Tagore, *Selected Short Stories*, trans. William Radice (London: Penguin, 1994), 309.
22. The first line of a popular poem by Madanmohan Tarkalankar, a mid-nineteenth-century Bengali reformer who supported education for girls.
23. The *kathāmālā* is the Bengali version of *Aesop's Fables*, another of Ishvarchandra Vidyasagar's books for children.
24. See n. 12 above; this is the Bengali spelling.
25. *Āgamanī* songs, or songs anticipating the "coming" of the goddess Umā to her parents' home during the annual autumnal Durga Puja festival, are mournful expressions of longing and hope.
26. Ardhodaya is the annual auspicious conjunction of the stars in the months of Paush or Magh, when Hindus take a ritual bath in the Ganges.
27. Rome, or Europe generally.

28. The first sources are the Quran and the actions and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, i.e., the hadith.

6. MAHATMA GANDHI AND RESPONSES

1. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (hereafter CWMG), 100 vols. (Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1961), 1:51.
2. CWMG 39:74 (*Autobiography; or, The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, 1929).
3. CWMG 39:125.
4. Hector Bolitho, *Jinnah, Creator of Pakistan* (London: John Murray, 1954), 84.
5. Interview with Abdul Ghaffar Khan (then in exile) by Dennis Dalton, Kabul, Afghanistan, July 1975.
6. Winston Churchill, *India: Speeches* (London: T. Butterworth, 1931), 94–95.
7. Dennis Dalton, *Mahatma Gandhi: Nonviolent Power in Action* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).
8. Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1956–1958), 2:409.
9. Padmini Sengupta, *Sarojini Naidu* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1974), 328.
10. On 1 July 1909, Madan Lal Dhingra, an Indian student, assassinated Sir William Curzon-Wyllie, political aide-de-camp to Lord Morley, the secretary of state for India.
11. CWMG 20:427.
12. What Gandhi means here is that there is a satyagraha movement in the right spirit, governed by love and truth, and a satyagraha movement in the wrong spirit, where the outward form is correct but the inner motivation is fear or hate. Obviously Gandhi vastly preferred the former to the latter.
13. On April 10, 11, and 12, the mob committed various acts of violence, such as the burning of government offices and railway stations, disruption of communications, and assaults on or murder of Europeans and government officials.
14. CWMG 6:283.
15. CWMG 64:165.
16. CWMG 43:180–181.
17. Reginald Reynolds, who took the letter to the viceroy, referring to it in *To Live in Mankind* (New York: Doubleday, 1952), 51–52, observes: “Before I went Gandhi insisted I should read the letter carefully, as he did not wish me to associate myself with it unless I was in complete agreement with its contents. My taking of this letter was, in fact, intended to be symbolic of the fact that this was not merely a struggle between the Indians and the British.”
18. Quoted in D. G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, rev. ed., vol. 6 (Delhi: The Publications Division, Government of India, 1962), 76.
19. *Ibid.*, 174.
20. *Ibid.*, 175.
21. Panchayat Rule is an old South Asian form of village rule, with an elected assembly (*yat*) of five (*panch*) elders making decisions for the village and settling disputes. The 73rd Amendment to the Indian Constitution, passed in 1992, contains provisions

- for this devolution of power to the village level; panchayats are responsible for economic development and the administration of social justice.
22. The honorific addition of “ji” is so common that it is used by Nehru and Godse alike.
 23. Although this theme was incorporated by Karl Wittfogel in *Oriental Despotism* (1957), it has since been discredited by most economic historians.
 24. Robert C. North and X. J. Eudin, *M. N. Roy's Mission to China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 1.
 25. John Callaghan, *Rajani Palme Dutt: A Study in British Stalinism* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1993).
 26. M. N. Roy, *Memoirs* (Bombay: Asia Publishers, 1964), 379, 543, 413.
 27. James Ramsay MacDonald (1866–1937) was a British Labour politician who served two separate terms as prime minister of the United Kingdom.
 28. Khalid Sayeed, *Pakistan: The Formative Phase* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 78.
 29. “Maulana” is a title preceding the name of a respected Muslim religious leader.
 30. H. W. Hale describes many incidents, including bombs thrown indiscriminately by terrorists into crowds of civilians. He calls the months leading up to the attack on Irwin “intensive bomb-making” activity, especially by those associated directly or indirectly with the HSRA. The most notorious example was the terrorist Bhagat Singh, who threw a bomb in the Legislative Assembly Hall at Delhi on April 8, 1929. See H. W. Hale, *Political Trouble in India, 1917–1937* (Allahabad: Chugh, 1974), 60–62.
 31. *Ibid.*, 210.
 32. The closeness of this vote was indeed a shock to Gandhi, and Kartar Singh is correct in his assessment of its significance.
 33. Arthur James Balfour (1848–1930) was a British Conservative politician and statesman who became prime minister of Britain from 1902 to 1905. He is perhaps most famous for the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which supported the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.
 34. *Kudi Arasu*, Madras, 2 May 1925, quoted in Nicholas B. Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 259.
 35. Dirks, *Castes of Mind*, 257.
 36. Ellen Cicely Wilkinson (1891–1947) was one of the first women in Britain to be elected as a Member of Parliament (MP). She was part of a delegation sent to India in 1932 by the India League to investigate the prevailing conditions there. The report was critical of the British government in India, including its resort to “emergency ordinances,” with their provisions for police acts and arrests. The government banned the report.
 37. V. D. Savarkar, *The Story of My Transportation for Life* (Bombay: Sadbhakti, 1950; first published in Marathi, 1927), 521.
 38. The above introduction to Godse is indebted to Ashis Nandy, “The Politics of the Assassination of Gandhi,” in *At the Edge of Psychology* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1980), 70–98.
 39. Humayun Kabir, “Muslim Politics, 1942–47,” in *The Partition of India*, ed. C. H. Phillips and M. D. Wainwright (London: Allen and Unwin, 1970), 405. Percival

Spear, in *Modern India* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961), 424, comments: "The manner and circumstances of his [Gandhi's] death transformed the situation. The Mahatma was even more powerful in death than in life. The policy of revenge was abandoned. The Hindu extremists were discredited. . . . The danger of bitterness boiling over into anti-Muslim pogroms was averted."

40. Nathuram Godse, *May It Please Your Honour* (Pune: Shri Gopal Godse, 1978), 7.
41. *Ibid.*, 9.

7. TO INDEPENDENCE AND PARTITION

1. Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, *Freedom at Midnight* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975).
2. Interviews were with Bengal I.C.S. officers, retired in the UK, 1971–1972; with leaders of the Bengal Muslim League, in Dhaka, 1972, 1976; and with Congress leaders and ordinary citizens of India, 1972–1973, 1976.
3. Francis G. Hutchins, *The Illusion of Permanence: British Imperialism in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).
4. Gynandra Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990).
5. Quoted in Farhat Tabassum, *Deoband Ulema's Movement for the Freedom of India* (New Delhi: Manak, 2006), 142.
6. Quoted in Ziya-ul-Hasan Faruqi, *The Deoband School and the Demand for Pakistan* (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1963), 112.
7. Quoted in Faruqi, *The Deoband School*, 97.
8. S. R. Mehrotra, *Towards India's Freedom and Partition* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1979), 197.
9. Penderel Moon, *Divide and Quit* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962).
10. Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League, and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 174ff.
11. Vallabhbhai Patel, called Sardar (Chief), was an important Congress leader from the Bombay area, a confidant of Gandhi, a long-time political organizer for the Congress, and deputy prime minister under Nehru after Independence.
12. Ambubachi is a three-day period in the month of Ashadh when Hindu widows keep a fast.
13. The Khilafat movement (1919–1924) agitated for the preservation of the caliphate in Turkey after the Ottomans were defeated by the British in World War I. Led mainly by Indian Muslims, and supported by Gandhi, the movement was disbanded in 1924, when the Republic of Turkey itself abolished the caliphate.
14. Maulana Hasrat Mohani (1875–1951) was a poet, member of the Muslim League, founding member of the Communist Party of India, and a believer in armed revolt against the British.
15. Mian Fazl-i-Husain (1877–1936) was the most influential Muslim in India in the 1920s and early 1930s. Leader of the Muslim League Punjab branch, where Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims lived in a delicate demographic balance, he realized the importance of Unionist politics and opposed the idea of a separate state for Muslims.

16. "Sanghathan" and "Tanzim" here refer to Hindu and Muslim reformist movements, respectively, which were active in the 1920s. The latter was founded mainly in response to the former, which strove to reclaim and reconvert Muslims, and to militarize Hindus for national solidarity.
17. Quoted in Dhananjay Keer, *Savarkar and His Times* (Bombay: A. V. Keer, 1950), 219.
18. A member of the Brahmo, Prarthana, or Arya Samajes.
19. Orthodox Hindu.
20. Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, *Evolution of Pakistan* (Lahore: All-Pakistan Legal Decisions, 1963), 31–32.
21. Pirzada, *Evolution of Pakistan*, 27, quoting Choudhary Rahmat Ali, *Pakistan: The Fatherland of the Pak Nation* (1947).
22. According to some records, he was born in 1876.
23. Hector Bolitho, *Jinnah, Creator of Pakistan* (London: John Murray, 1954), 17.
24. G. Allana, *Quaid-e-azam Jinnah: The Story of a Nation* (Lahore: Ferozsons, 1967), 62.
25. Edwin S. Montagu, *An Indian Diary*, ed. Venetia Montagu (London: W. Heinemann, 1930), 57–58.
26. CWMG 34:175.
27. Jinnah, *Some Recent Speeches and Writings*, ed. Jamil-ud-din Ahmed, 2 vols. (Lahore: M. Ashraf, 1942), 2:314.
28. Bolitho, *Jinnah*, 95.
29. Of these four female leaders, Ahilya Bai Holkar is discussed in chapter 1.
30. Mehrotra, *Towards India's Freedom and Partition*, 230–232.
31. Quoted in Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1977), 2:279.
32. An act passed by the Punjab Legislative Council in 1925 which gave control of all Sikh places of worship to a representative body of Khalsa, or orthodox, Sikhs. This in effect removed from power the non-Khalsa Sikh *mahants*, or priests, who had assumed jurisdiction of the shrines from 1849, when the British began to rule Punjab.
33. Khwaja Abdul Majid (1875–1962) was a lawyer, educationalist, and social reformer who supported Gandhi in his opposition to the partition of India.
34. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru (1875–1949), of Kashmiri parentage, was an eminent lawyer, and a political and social leader, who helped mediate the Gandhi–Irwin Pact of 1930 and the Poona Pact of 1932.
35. An organization founded in the 1930s whose aim was to bring Hindi and Urdu writers together.

8. ISSUES IN POST-INDEPENDENCE INDIA

1. Jawaharlal Nehru, *Independence and After, 1946–1949* (Delhi: Publications Division, Government of India, 1949), 4; taken from Nehru's midnight speech of August 14, 1947, quoted below.
2. Rabindranath Tagore, *One Hundred and One Poems* (New York: Asia, 1966), 173.
3. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (New York: John Day, 1946), 37–44.
4. Nehru, *Independence and After*, 4; quoted below.

5. Tamil Nadu Elementary Education Act (1920), with amendments of 1973.
6. Head of the largest, richest landowning family in the village.
7. Mailam, a small town in northern Tamil Nadu, is the site of a Murugan temple. Untouchables were traditionally debarred from entering such places of worship.
8. A type of white flower that has hundreds of fragile, hairlike stamens.
9. Quoted in B. R. Verma, *Commentaries on Mohammedan Law* (Allahabad: Law Publications, 2002), 145.
10. Veena Talwar Oldenburg, *Dowry Murder: The Imperial Origins of a Cultural Crime* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 201.
11. Imrana, a twenty-eight-year-old mother of five living with her husband in the Muzaffarnagar district of Uttar Pradesh, was raped by her father-in-law in June 2005. Although he was eventually punished by the state, village elders and several Islamic jurists declared Imrana the guilty one, in effect charging her with adultery and overlooking the rape, and stated that she would have to live with another man, since her husband was now to be considered her son. This sparked nationwide controversy. In London in October 2006, Ayesha Azmi was awarded about \$2,000 in recompense for being dismissed from her job as a teaching assistant because she wore a full-face veil, or niqab, while teaching. Azmi's case sparked a national debate in Britain.
12. Nehru, *Independence and After*, 123.
13. Technical Sanskrit philosophical terms for the three components of the universe: lightness (*sattva*), dynamism (*rajas*), and darkness (*tamas*).
14. Nehru to Chou En-Lai, Sept. 26, 1959, *Documents on the Sino-Indian Boundary Question* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1960), 78.
15. Quoted in Dennis Kux, *Estranged Democracies: India and the United States, 1941–1991* (New Delhi: Sage, 1993), 145.

9. PAKISTAN, 1947 AND LATER: THE STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL UNITY

1. Quoted in Sharif al Mujahid, *Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah: Studies in Interpretation* (Karachi: Quaid-i-Azam Academy, 1981), 640.
2. Paul Valéry, *The Collected Works of Paul Valéry*, 10: *History and Politics*, trans. D. Folliot and J. Mathews (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1962), 114.
3. For a listing of such books and articles, see Stephen P. Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), 1–5.
4. Muhammad Iqbal, *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, compiled by “Shamloo” (Lahore: Al-Manar Academy, 1948), 11–13.
5. Allen McGrath, *The Destruction of Pakistan's Democracy* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996), 132.
6. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, *Selected Speeches and Statements of the Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah: 1911–34 and 1947*, ed. M. Rafiq Afzal (Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, University of the Punjab, 1966), 456.
7. The customs and sayings of the prophet Muhammad.
8. Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi (1904–1997) was a prominent scholar of Islam in Pakistan and a high-ranking member of the Jamaat-i-Islami.

9. *Tawīl* is finding analogous situations; *qiyās* is determining how to act if there is no clear injunction; *ijtihād* is applying human reason in interpreting a text; and *istih-sān* is finding the best procedure in the light of the teachings of Islam.
10. Quoted in Dennis Kux, *The United States and Pakistan, 1947–2000: Disenchanted Allies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 56.
11. Quoted in Ian Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (London: Hurst, 1998), 146.
12. Quoted in Owen Bennett Jones, *Pakistan: Eye of the Storm* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 187.

10. BANGLADESH: INDEPENDENCE AND CONTROVERSIES OVER THE FRUITS OF FREEDOM

1. Dacca was renamed Dhaka after the liberation war of 1971.
2. The Communal Award allocated seats in central and provincial legislatures according to groups and their interests, but the seats were not proportionate to population percentages. Muslims, 54 percent of the population of Bengal at the time, received 47.8 percent of the seats, and Hindus (put in the “General” category in the Award), though 44 percent of the population, received, together with the Depressed Classes, only 32 percent of the seats. In addition, voting was to be by separate electorates.
3. Harun-Or-Rashid, “Bengal Ministries 1937–1947,” in *History of Bangladesh, 1704–1971*, vol. 1: *Political History*, 2nd ed. (1992; Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1997), 256.
4. Kazi Ahmed Kamal, *Politicians and Inside Stories: A Glimpse Mainly Into Lives of Fazlul Huq, Shaheed Suhrawardy, and Moulana Bhashani* (Dacca: Kazi Giasuddin Ahmed, 1970), 111.
5. Poush is the ninth Bengali month, from mid-December to mid-January.
6. Mahākāl, Great Time, is an epithet for Shiva, the god of destruction.

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